Conscience and Consciousness

Rousseau's Contribution to the Stoic Theory of *Oikeiosis*[1]

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> But, as is always the case, that which can already be found in the older philosophers is seen only when one has newly thought it out for oneself. After people understood Democritus with the help of Galileo they could reproach the latter for not really reporting anything new.
>
> Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*

IN PLACE OF AN ABSTRACT: I am grateful for the invitation to present work to the NYU seminar on Modern Contributions to the Theory of Consciousness and Self-Consciousness – not only for all the obvious reasons, but also because the theme of the series affords an opportunity to tackle a topic that for any other occasion would seem vastly over-ambitious. For I here set out to trace the history of a conception of self-consciousness from its first formulation in the 3rd century BC, through its reception among Roman philosophers of the 1st century AD, and finally to its fate in Enlightenment thought of the 18th century. As if two thousand years of history were not more than enough for a single paper, I also have an ulterior motive. My broader aim is to use this history to clarify and defend an idea that figured centrally in the history of philosophy, but which has recently come under sustained attack: the idea that human beings are in some very fundamental way self-conscious beings, and that our self-consciousness serves as a kind of foundation or transcendental condition for our other cognitive capacities. Obviously, given the scale of these ambitions, the presentation here should be considered at best a sketch. It is intended not to settle any matters, but at least to bring back into view a line of argument that has been covered over by more recent developments.

This paper is offered as a modest contribution towards what I think of as an *Alternate History of Self-Consciousness*. Few will dispute that the problems of self-consciousness are among the central themes in modern philosophy. Indeed some will go so far as to say that self-consciousness is *the* theme of modern philosophy *par excellence*. In Descartes and in Kant, to take the two most prominent examples, self-consciousness plays a foundational role both in philosophy and in human existence. For Descartes, self-consciousness is epistemically fundamental: it provides us with a distinctive and indubitable self-knowledge that in turn establishes both the foundation and standard for all scientific knowledge. For Kant, apperceptive self-consciousness is, we might say, transcendentally fundamental: it serves as the condition

[1] This paper is still very much work in progress, but I have already incurred an extensive set of debts in working on it. Among the many who have provided me useful leads and feedback I would here like to acknowledge in particular Donald Rutherford, David Brink, Ivo Gatzinski, David McNeil, Michael Tiboris and Walter Durán.

on the possibility of all objective representation. Among later thinkers, Fichte also treats self-consciousness as philosophically foundational, while Hegel casts self-consciousness as a collective accomplishment and as a defining *telos* in human history. In recent times, by contrast, self-consciousness has suffered a far less noble fate. In a wide range of 20th century traditions, self-consciousness has been denigrated, demoted or otherwise dismissed from its position, as Kant had it, at the "highest point" of philosophy. The assault has come from almost every direction imaginable. Ryle and Heidegger rejected, from quite different positions but for similar reasons, the idea that self-conscious subjectivity is the hallmark of human existence. Semantic externalism challenged the assumption that individuals have a privileged knowledge of the content of their own thoughts or the meaning of their utterances, a conclusion which received support from another angle from Davidsonian interpretivism in the philosophy of mind and language. Behaviourism, Functional State Identity Theory, and Psychoanalytic Theory each in their own way challenged the traditional assumption that to be in a state of mind is *ipso facto* to know that one is in that state. And countless empirical studies seemed to tell us that we are often quite ignorant as to our own psychological states. It is this waxing and waning in the philosophical fortunes of self-consciousness that I shall refer to as the Standard History of Self-Consciousness.

The main outlines of this Standard History are by now common currency in philosophy, though certainly the issues that emerged within that history are as contentious as ever. But there is a need, I submit, for an Alternate History of Self-Consciousness – one which neither begins with Descartes nor allows its agenda to be set by the Cartesian construal of self-consciousness and the epistemic issues which took pride of place in his account.[2] A properly thorough alternate history would have to be quite far-reaching. It would require discussions both of the self-conscious shame that figures in Genesis 3:7 and of the ideal of self-knowledge that figured in pre-Socratic Greek religious traditions. It would have to encompass an investigation of self-portraiture, confession, and autobiography alongside the Standard discussions of self-identification and self-ascription. Among the philosophers it would need to engage Fichte's claim that self-consciousness is striving and Heidegger's claims about the ontological self-concern constitutive of *Dasein*. And it would have to have something to say about the distinctive forms of self-consciousness so salient at every Junior High School Dance. For my purposes here, however, I will be satisfied if I can contribute to this project by recovering elements of a conception of self-consciousness that was common to the Ancient Stoic tradition and to the moral psychology articulated by Rousseau.

My main aim here is strictly historical: to develop an understanding of how self-consciousness was understood *prior* to the construal that Descartes powerfully crystallized and developed. The self-consciousness that has been so thoroughly attacked in recent times has in the main been self-consciousness as theorized by Descartes: private, inner, psychological, epistemic – a self-certainty about one's own

[2] Add a note here about the historical scope of some standard reference entries on self-consciousness, which typically mention nothing prior to 1600. This is not simply due to historical short-sightedness; often is grows out of a conviction that consciousness is a distinctively modern notion – whether it is treated as a crucial discovery (as in Husserl's historiography) or as an aberration (as in Heidegger's).

existence and mental states that is somehow independent of and prior to our knowledge of an accordingly "external" world. But was there perhaps an understanding of self-consciousness already in play before Descartes got to work? And might some such theorization withstand the recent assaults? Allen Wood has recently written that, when it comes to philosophy of mind, "we are all recovering Cartesians – in the same sense that some people are said to be recovering alcoholics."[3] If there is any truth to this, then it may be of some help to know something of how self-consciousness was understood prior to the first appearance of our modern Cartesian addiction.

It is in pursuit of this goal that I undertake in what follows to trace the history of the ancient notion of *Oikeiosis*.[4] *Oikeiosis* is a concept that was made prominent by the ancient Greek Stoics and figured centrally both in their moral psychology and in their ethics. It was held to be a fundamental attribute of human nature, and to function as a kind of condition on the possibility of other human capacities. Most importantly for our purposes, it was understood by a number of ancient writers to be a form of self-consciousness, self-awareness or sentiment of self. Determining exactly what kind of self-consciousness is at work in *Oikeiosis* will present us with a number of philological and philosophical challenges. Some of the difficulties are due to the fragmentary and second-hand nature of the most important sources. (Of the writings of Chryssipus, a major figure in the history of *Oikeiosis,* something on the order of 700 books have not survived.) But there is a different set of difficulties endemic to any attempt to think about consciousness and self-consciousness across the Cartesian Divide. Accordingly my strategy in what follows will be to start from the assumption that we know neither what the Stoics meant by *Oikeiosis* nor what they meant by self-consciousness. It is my hope that in determining the sense of the former we shall learn something about the latter, and that this historical tilling might thereby show a philosophical yield.

I proceed as follows: The first four sections of the paper are devoted to recovering the Stoic construal of *Oikeiosis* and to tackling some of the difficulties it raises. The first of these sections reviews some standard philological information about *Oikeiosis*; the second and third examine its role in two prominent Stoic disputes. Using these resources to fix its content, §4 then addresses the Stoic claims about *Oikeiosis* as a form of self-consciousness. In the three sections that follow, I argue that this Stoic construal of self-consciousness did not simply disappear with the rise of Modern conceptions of self-consciousness as self-certain self-presence and self-knowledge. The Stoic legacy can profitably be traced, I think, in a number of different counter-trends within the modern tradition, including those associated with the figures

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[3] Allen Wood, "Fichte's Intersubjective I", *Inquiry* 49.1 (2006).

[4] Some notes concerning my treatment of sources is in order here. I shall leave the Greek word *Oikeiosis* untranslated; though I survey below some of the history of attempts to translate it, first into Latin and subsequently into French and English. In order to avoid undue cluttering of the pages, I have not followed the usual practice of using quotation marks to distinguish uses from mentions of this concept; I hope and expect that the difference will in each case be clear from the context. Finally, I have throughout quoted from standard modern English translations of primary sources, both out of a realistic sense of my own qualifications to improve upon the experts, and because the modern translation of ancient concepts is part of what concerns me here. The disadvantage of this policy is a loss of consistency and uniformity in the translation of certain technical terminology. I have tried to compensate for this loss by including key terms from the original texts in square brackets.

of Grotius, Fichte, Heidegger. But my investigation here will focus on the case of Rousseau. After reviewing some of the evidence concerning Rousseau's knowledge of and indebtedness to Stoicism (§5), I take up his development of the theory of *Oikeiosis* in his distinctive construal of conscience and self-consciousness (§6). I conclude (§7) with some observations concerning the phenomenology of *Oikeiosis*.

A final word of warning is in order before turning to the matters at hand. Although Stoicism was once celebrated for its broad and systematic approach to philosophy, it is now generally remembered more narrowly as an ethical doctrine. Both in broader traffic in common usage and more narrowly within philosophical discussion, the Stoics are chiefly associated with their provocative ethical teachings: that virtue is the only genuine good and suffices to ensure happiness; that accordingly nothing can harm a good man, who will be 'happy even on the rack'; that pleasure is not a genuine good nor pain a genuine evil; that life is to be lived 'in accordance with nature.' At various junctures below my discussion touches quite closely on Stoic ethical teachings, and indeed upon their successors in the history of ethics. The notion of *Oikeiosis* is itself often said to be the basic notion in Stoic ethics, and obviously the notion of conscience is of directly ethical import. But I wish to emphasize that my chief concern in what follows is not to assess or defend Stoic ethics, about which I here seek to remain studiously neutral. My aim, rather, is to extract from these Stoic discussions an underlying philosophy of consciousness, and in particular to probe their distinctive construal of the character of self-consciousness. To anticipate my thesis in a far-too-catchy slogan, I shall argue both that conscience is self-consciousness and that self-consciousness is conscience.

§1 *Oikeiosis*: A Philological Primer

I start with the basics, with apologies to those for whom this part is old hat. What is *Oikeiosis*? As it happens, almost everything about its interpretation is controversial. Some say it was the basic notion in Stoic ethics; others deny this.[5] Some say it was an idea original to the Stoics; others insist it was derivative.[6] To some it marks a decisive step away from a persistent moral failing in Ancient ethics; others argue that it was a dangerous and absurd doctrine.[7] To get a preliminary bead both on the concept and some of the attendant difficulties of interpretation, it may be worth beginning with a selective survey of the history of its translation. When Cicero set out to translate Greek philosophy into Latin (a process Heidegger once described as 'fateful for Western ontology') he rendered the Greek term with a pair of Latin words: *conciliatio et commendatio*.[8] Centuries later Grotius preferred to leave the Greek term

[5] For the affirmative claim see Pohlenz 1940 and Pembroke 1971; for the denial see Striker 1983: 165.
[6] von Armin 1926 argues that the Stoics borrowed the notion from the Peripatetic school; the Stoic claim to originality is vigorously defended in Pohlenz 1940 and in a more qualified way in Brink 1956.
[7] For a sampling of this debate see Pangle 1998 and Padgen 2000.
[8] Cicero, *de Finibus* III, 16. Hicks translates this phrase as "attachment and affection". More literally one might say "a bringing together and recommendation." Cicero's rendering has recently been echoed by Irwin, who translates *Oikeiosis* as *conciliation*. (Irwin 2003, 252).

untranslated, but explained it in Latin as an *appetites societatis* – a desire for society. In the 19th century William Whewell translated *Oikeiosis* as *the domestic instinct*, bringing out the connection to the Greek root *oikos*: a house or dwelling. Among recent classical scholars there has been an array of proposed translations: Long uses *appropriation* but also at times resorts to *love*; Annas prefers *familiarization*; C.O. Brink leaves the term untranslated but glosses it with the English word *affinity*, a choice which has been echoed recently by Schofield.[9] One standard modern translation of Greek Stoic sources uses *affection, endearment*, or *being-near-and-dear*.[10] S.G. Pembroke describes *Oikeiosis* as *well-disposedness*. Both the lack of any settled translation and the diversity of these proposals provides us with a first hint that the term may not be easy to appropriate directly into an idiom shaped by modern assumptions – although even this claim has been challenged in the literature.[11]

In the face of the difficulties occasioned by this unfamiliarity and lack of consensus, my main approach here will be to resort to what is nowadays known as inferentialist semantics. We can fix the content of a concept, according to this approach, by uncovering its inferential role. What does the invocation of *Oikeiosis* entail? What considerations are used in justifying its application? And what role does it play in Stoic arguments and proofs? If we can identify the inferential patterns in which the Stoics themselves deployed the notion then we shall be well on our way towards understanding it for ourselves. Fortunately for this inferentialist approach, the Stoics were notoriously disputatious philosophers, and moreover were constantly defending their philosophical views in the face of a sustained barrage of criticism from rival schools. So there is no shortage of inferences to examine. In the sections that follow I consider two such inferential contexts in which the notion of *Oikeiosis* occurs, the first pertaining to Stoic cosmopolitanism in ethics, the second to the Stoic theory of motivation and agency. Before turning to these disputes, however, we will do well to supplement our inferentialism with a somewhat more conventional philological approach.

According to the Lexicon, *Oikeiosis* is to be defined as "a taking as one's own, appropriation."[12] It derives from the root *Oikos*, meaning house or dwelling – the same Greek root as in the more familiar modern word, 'economics' (literally: the law of the household). S.G. Pembroke provides a useful set of notes on the grammar and history of the term:

> The verb *oikeioun*, which is intransitive, turns up in various forms in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. meaning to appropriate goods or, when applied to people, to win them over – the object of official diplomacy as well as private intrigue. [T]he noun *oikeiosis* is used in this sense by Thucydides. … *Oikeios*, to go back to the adjective, is regularly contrasted with *allotrios*, what belongs to someone else or is in wider sense alien to oneself[.][13]

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[9] Schofield 2003, 243.
[10] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, translation by R.D. Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1925, 1931).
[11] See Pembroke 1971, 114: "*Oikeiosis* does not need bringing up to date."
[12] Liddel and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1889, 1992), 545.
[13] Pembroke 1971, 115.

Pembroke's final comment here will be particularly useful to us in what follows, and already amounts to a first data point in our hunt for inferential patterns. For while the term *Oikeiosis* may nowadays be unfamiliar, its traditional opposite is not. *Oikeiosis* is the opposite of *allotriosis*, the Greek term for alienation. As with the modern English, these terms have an original economic sense: one alienates a piece of property by selling it, and one appropriates it when one makes it one's own. But as we shall see, these opposed economic terms come to have an extended application in both ethics and psychology.

The early history of the use of *Oikeiosis* in philosophy is uncertain and disputed, but most scholars credit its introduction specifically to the Stoics. It is absent from the extant writings of Plato and Aristotle, but it can be traced at least to the writings of Chrysippus (c. 282-206 B.C.). Chrysippus was the third leader of the Stoic School (after Zeno of Citium and Cleanthes) and by many accounts was the master theoretician of the Greek Stoic tradition. Almost all of Chrysippus' writings have been lost, but in the VIIth book of *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes claims to quote directly from his book *On Ends*. I quote the relevant passage in full:

> An animal's first impulse, say the Stoics, is to self-preservation, because nature from the outset endears [*oikeiouses*] it to itself , as Chrysippus affirms in the first book of his work, *On Ends*: his words are, "The dearest thing [*proton oikeion*] to every animal is its own constitution and its consciousness thereof"; for it was not likely that nature should estrange the living thing from itself or that she should leave the creature she has made without either estrangement from [*allotriosai*] or affection for [*oikeiosai*] its own constitution. We are forced then to conclude that nature in constituting the animal made it near and dear to itself [*oikeiothai pro eauto*]; for so it comes to repel all that is injurious and give free access to all that is serviceable or akin to it [*ta oikeia*].[14]

Both in the direct quote from Chrysippus and in the attendant commentary from Diogenes we can see the basic outlines of the doctrine of *Oikeiosis*. As presented here it combines cosmological and psychological commitments. The cosmological doctrine involves a view of animals as the products of nature (*phusis*) which is itself conceived to be a unified and rational creative force. The basic psychological doctrine is a form of what we would now call psychological egoism: animals (including humans) are said to be endowed with an innate impulse or instinct (the Greek is *horme*, root of the modern biological term, 'hormone') toward self-preservation. Hence whenever an infant suckles at a nipple or a turtle struggles to right itself (two of the stock examples) Stoics see *Oikeiosis* at work: a rational natural order is so constituted to ensure that animals are immediately drawn toward what serves and preserves them.

Two features of this early treatment of the doctrine deserve comment. First, although I have been talking so far of this whole complex of claims as the Stoic doctrine of *Oikeiosis*, it is worth taking note of the particular ways in which the term (and its grammatical relatives) figure in the articulation of the theory. The concept enters first in stating the relationship that nature establishes between an animal and itself, or more specifically between an animal and its constitution [*sustasis*]. In Hicks' translation this is said to be a relationship of endearment [*oikeioses*], and the animal's constitution is said to be 'the dearest thing' [*proton*

[14] Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, VII, 85; translation by R.D. Hicks.

oikeion]. With an ear for the etymological origins we might think of this as the animal being innately 'at home' in its own body. In keeping with the inferential pattern already noted, this preestablished 'endearment' is here contrasted with a state of alienation or estrangement [*allotriosai*]. Notice, however, that the *Oikeiosis* said to be manifested in an animal's self-concern immediately reappears in its relations to various objects and states in its environment. Some of these objects are now encountered as *ta oikeia*: things that are 'appropriate' (or 'serviceable and akin', as Hicks has it here) to the animal's preservation.[15] These are contrasted to those that are injurious or in some way threaten harm. *Oikeiosis* in this way begins as a self-relation but immediately broadens to inform and structure the animal's experience of the objects around it.

The second point to note here is that Chryssipus' doctrine – part psychological hypothesis, part metaphysical conviction – involves an appeal to some sort of self-consciousness or self-understanding. This thought is already to be found in that portion of the passage that Diogenes claims to derive directly from his source. In Hicks' rendering: what is dear to the animal is both the animals own constitution *and its consciousness thereof*. We must take care not to interpret this claim prematurely. The Greek term is *syneidesin*, which we might transliterate as 'occurring with ideas.' Hicks' translation can certainly be justified on etymological grounds; the Latin roots '*con-scio*' literally mean 'with-knowing', and hence echo the etymology of the Greek. But we must here check our tendency to import anachronistic preconceptions about what this consciousness amounts to. For now we can simply note that already among the earliest statements of the *Oikeiosis* doctrine it is associated with some kind of self-awareness or self-understanding. It is also worth noting that we here encounter a second Greek term that is absent from the Platonic and Aristotelian corpus. It is found, however, in the Greek of the New Testament and the early Christian church, where it is standardly translated as "conscience."[16]

One final point is worth adding before turning to the Stoic deployment of *Oikeiosis* in disputes and proofs. At least since later Greek antiquity, and quite probably earlier as well, the doctrine of *Oikeiosis* has been associated with an image: that of a set of concentric circles.[17] In some recent discussions the circles have been associated specifically with what is distinguished as "social *Oikeiosis*" as opposed to "individual *Oikeiosis*",[18] but there is reason to believe that these are best understood as two aspects of a single unified view. The central circle is identified with the individual, with progressively broader circles marking the domains of the immediate family, household, city and so on. The broadest circle is associated with the whole of humanity, or of rational beings in total. The image of the circles requires interpretation, but it

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[15] Elsewhere Hicks renders this important phrase with the rather obscure English word 'aliments'.
[16] The term occurs quite regularly in the Pauline epistles. A particularly important example comes in Romans 2:15: "They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience [*syneideseos*] also bears witness … ." I am grateful to David McNeil for his assistance in researching this textual history.
[17] On Hierocles use of the image, see below. Cicero uses the image at *de Officiis* (I, 54), a text which is known to have exercised considerable influence on Kant. The image of the circles became common in Enlightenment discussions of sympathy. See e.g., Hume <<find ref>>.
[18] See in particular Julia Annas's edition of Cicero's *de Finibus* (Cambridge, 2001), 69n7.

suggests that *Oikeiosis* is not to be understood simply as a psychological state or disposition but as a process. As a pebble dropped in water creates a spreading set of circles, so in psychological maturation the self-concern at work in *Oikeiosis* tends systematically to broaden its scope to encompass not just the individual but a progressively larger domain of those around him. We have just seen one example of this broadening in the transfer of *Oikeiosis* from an animal's self-concern to a concern with objects in the immediate environment. As we shall see presently, the Stoics also made a much more contentious claim about the form this broadening takes in specifically human maturation.

§2 *Oikeiosis* and Stoic Cosmopolitanism

I turn now to consider the role played by *Oikeiosis* in two important Stoic arguments. I neither case will I undertake a thorough-going interpretation and assessment of these arguments, each of which raise a number of thorny issues in ethics and psychology; my aim is rather to advance our understanding of Stoic *Oikeiosis* by considering its purported inferential significance. The first of the two arguments concerns the Stoics' distinctive commitment to cosmopolitanism. The term "cosmopolitan" is said to derive from a saying of the Cynic Diogenes; when asked where he was from he reportedly would answer: "I am a citizen of the world [*kosmopolites*]."[19] But it was the Stoics, among the ancient schools, who did most to promote the cosmopolitan ideal. A passage from Plutarch's book on Alexander the Great exhibits key elements of Stoic position.

> The much admired *Republic* of Zeno ... is aimed at this main point, that our household arrangements should not be based on cities or parishes, each one marked out by its own legal system, but we should regard all men as our fellow citizens and local residents, and there should be one way of life and order, like that of a herd grazing together and nurtured by a common law. Zeno wrote this, picturing as it were, a dream or image of a philosopher's well regulated society.[20]

It is worth distinguishing two dimensions of universality in the position Plutarch attributes to Zeno. The first is universalism in the scope of moral theory. That is, it is an answer to the question: "To whom, exactly, do our ethical standards apply?" Here Zeno's answer seems to be: *everyone*. He envisions a single, universal legal code -- a "common law" for all -- encompassing not only all "cities and parishes" but every caste and rank within society as well. The most prominent ancient Stoics famously included an emperor (Marcus Aurelius) and a slave (Epictetus) and Stoic moral teachings purport to provide rules of conduct equally suited to both.

This first dimension of universality in Stoic moral theory was to exercise considerable influence on later ethical traditions (starting already with early Christianity), and it certainly marked a break from the

[19] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VI, 63
[20] Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander 329A-B*

religiously based ethical systems that prescribed rules of conduct only for those of a particular faith or community. But among the ancient philosophical schools this alone cannot be said to mark a fundamental break, even if was given new emphasis and prominence by the Stoics. For in retrospect we can recognize elements of this sort of ethical universalism in the positions of Plato and Aristotle, particularly insofar as their ethical theories were rooted firmly in accounts of human (as opposed to narrowly Greek or Athenian) psychology. Nonetheless, there is no denying that there were crucial limitations of scope in pre-Stoic Greek ethics (Aristotle's account of slavery being the most notorious example), so the Stoics could rightly claim to have advanced a universalism that was at most incipient in earlier moral theory.

But Stoic cosmopolitanism also made a more radical break – and occasioned much more controversy – with a second claim to universality. In Plutarch's report we see this second form of universality at work in the claim that "we should regard all men as our fellow citizens and local residents." Here the question is not only one about the scope of our ethical *theory*; it is an issue about the scope of our ethical *commitments*. In contrast to virtually all earlier moral traditions, which simply assumed that the sphere of justice was delimited (whether to one's family, one's tribe, one's co-religionists, one's city, or to those with whom one had some direct contact), the Stoics held that the sphere of moral concern must in the limiting case extend to all rational beings. As Plutarch was writing, this 'philosopher's dream' was already implicated in the emergence of Ancient Imperialism, first in its Greek and then much more systematically in its Roman manifestations. But at its core lay a novel and controversial ethical ideal.

Stoic Cosmopolitanism has received considerable attention in recent years, in no small part because Cosmopolitanism itself has been an intensely disputed ideal in recent times.[21] But what matters for my purposes here is the role played in motivating it by the doctrine of *Oikeiosis*. An excerpt from Hierocles in Stobaeus' anthology will help bring out the connection. Hierocles begins with an invocation of the image of concentric circles, here elaborated in considerable detail:

> Each one of us is as it were entirely encompassed by many circles, some smaller, others larger, the latter enclosing the former on the basis of their different and unequal dispositions relative to each other. The first and closest circle is the one which a person has drawn as though around a centre, his own mind. This circle encloses the body and anything taken for the sake of the body. For it is virtually the smallest circle, and almost touches the centre itself. Next, the second one further removed from the centre but enclosing the first circle; this contains parents, siblings, wife, and children. The third one has in it uncles and aunts, grandparents, nephews, nieces, and cousins. The next circle includes the other relatives, and this is followed by the circle of local residents, then the circle of fellow-tribesmen, next that of fellow citizens, and then in the same way the circle of people from neighboring towns, and the circle of fellow-countrymen. The outermost and largest circle, which encompasses all the rest, is that of the whole human race.[22]

The very structure of Hierocles' image might already be taken to suggest a step toward cosmopolitanism, insofar as it involves situating the local community in relationship to the whole of humanity in the same

[21] See *inter alia*, Nussbaum 1997 and 2000, Prangle 1998, Padgen 2000, Hill 2000, Berges 2005.
[22] Hierocles, fragment excerpted in Stobaeus' *Eclogae* IV, 671ff.

sort of relationship that holds, e.g., between a family and the city of which it forms a part. This implicit cosmopolitan orientation soon becomes explicit in the form of a ethical prescription:

> Once all these [circles] have been surveyed, it is the task of a well tempered man, in his proper treatment of each group, to draw the circles together somehow toward the center, and to keep zealously transferring those from the enclosing circles into the enclosed ones. [ibid.]

Among other things, Hierocles' fragment exhibits some of the distinctive texture of Stoic cosmopolitanism. Hierocles, at least, does not seem to envision a kind of flat moral universalism, in which my obligations to those distant in time and space somehow equals (or ultimately overshadows) the special commitments I have to those in my family, or my village, or my academic community. Nor does Hierocles rule out the possibility that Plutarch's Zeno seems to exclude, namely that my deliberations might in some important sense be "based at home." The picture Hierocles offers is one where the distinction between near and far is still relevant to my deliberations; his point is that the scope of what is ethically relevant is universal, and that I have an obligation to "draw nearer" those who start out far away. Hierocles even specifies just how much closer the distant should be brought.

> It is incumbent upon us to respect people from the third circle as if they were those from the second, and again to respect our other relatives as if they were those from the third circle. … The right point will be reached if, through our own initiative, we reduce the distance of the relationship with each person. [ibid.]

This feature of Hierocles' cosmopolitanism has been overlooked by some influential recent commentators, who have tended to treat all Stoic cosmopolitanism on the model of the position attributed to Zeno.[23]

What does all this have to do with *Oikeiosis*? The answer should initially surprise us. Up to this point we have located the core of the *Oikeiosis* doctrine in a form of psychological egoism, but in the debate over cosmopolitanism the concept is used to justify a very robust account of the demands of justice. How could a form of self-interest or self-concern serve as the basis for such an expansive and unprecedented ethical demand? It is crucial to see that the Stoics' answer is *not* a precursor of a modern social contract approach, imagining a group of self-interested individuals bargaining over the rules for a just society. Rather, their position seems to be that cosmopolitan concern is the final stage in the process of *Oikeiosis*, as the self-concern already at work in the infant systematically expands as part of the natural process of maturation. This would seem to be a difficult claim to sustain, given the prevalence of xenophobia and other forms of parochialism in human existence as we actually observe it. But the Stoics held that such limitation of ethical perspective is properly understood as resulting from a disruption or corruption of the natural process whereby one's sphere of concern grows progressively wider: the process of *Oikeiosis*. Only in the Sage, perhaps, does it reach its widest and most fully developed extent, but that

[23] See in particular Nussbaum 1997, 7: "This being so, Stoic cosmopolitans hold, we should regard our deliberations as, first and foremost, deliberations about human problems of people in particular concrete situations, not problems growing out of a local or national identity that confines and limits our moral aspirations." This may be true of the position reported by Plutarch, but Hierocles seems explicitly to allow for a form of cosmopolitan deliberation that that "grows out of a local … identity," and even, by the specified degree, "limits our moral aspirations."

breadth of moral concern is the natural outcome of a natural process; it should therefore orient us in the cultivation of our moral instincts and capacities for deliberation, and even (if one happens to be a Stoic emperor) in one's political and military endeavors.

Like almost every Stoic teaching, this claim about the foundations of justice has been subject to severe criticism, both by ancient and modern critics, and it is easy to see that there are lots of problems with it. In the ancient world this was thought to be another of those repugnant Stoic paradoxes, and was widely held to be just as preposterous as the claim that, e.g., health does not contribute to happiness. The idea that one might care equally for a Greek and "the most distant Mysian" stuck many of the critics of Stoicism as not only straightforwardly false but also pernicious. After all, to abolish the idea that members of my family (or my fellow citizens or my academic colleagues …) have special claims upon my action would effectively be to abolish the family (and the state and academic departments …) as morally significant institutions. And this was rightly seen as quite anti-thetical to justice. It is in one such refutation – this from a late skeptical textbook only recently recovered – that we find one of the clearest statements of the inferential role of *Oikeiosis* in the Stoic cosmopolitan argument.

> We have an appropriate relationship to members of the same species. But a man's relationship to his own citizens is more appropriate. For appropriation varies in its intensification. So [as regards] those people [the Stoics] who derive justice from appropriation: if on the one hand they are saying that a man's appropriation to himself is equal to his appropriation in relation to the most distant Mysian, their assumption preserves justice; on the other hand, no one agrees with them that the appropriation is equal. That is contrary to plain fact and one's self-awareness. … If on the other hand they themselves should say that appropriation can be intensified, we may grant the existence of philanthropy, but the situations of two shipwrecked sailors will refute them.[24]

Notice that variants of the term *Oikeiosis* (appropriation) occur eight times in this densely argumentative fragment. The unknown skeptical author explicitly names the inferential pattern we have been discussing: the Stoics claim to "derive justice from *Oikeiosis*." But this derivation falters, according to the critic. The Stoics claim that *Oikeiosis* generates a concern that extends to the whole of humanity, but such a kinship is said to be insufficient to 'preserve justice.' The refutation turns on a dilemma concerning variability in *Oikeiosis*. If the strength of species-wide *Oikeiosis* is held to be strictly equivalent to that of narrowly self-directed *Oikeiosis*, then the Stoic psychological thesis is "contrary to plain fact." But if even the slightest degree of variation is admitted then a conception of justice derived from *Oikeiosis* has morally objectionable consequences and fails in its claim to warrant a cosmopolitan ethic. The explication of the argument is not fully spelled out in the portion of the text that has survived, but it is not hard to extrapolate the "case of the shipwrecked sailors" which is meant to press it. Philanthropy may indeed be natural, but the circumstances of justice make themselves felt precisely in those situations where the self-interest of one agent comes into conflict with the interests of others. If two sailors are clinging to a timber that suffices only for keeping one afloat, then one or the other will have to drown. But if one's natural concern for one's

[24] *Commentary on Plato's Theaetetus*, 5.18-6.31, 57H in Long and Sedley.

own preservation is greater by even the smallest fraction than one's concern for the wellbeing of others then Stoic justice would seem to require that one always chooses self-preservation at the expense of others in such circumstances.[25]

It is certainly tempting to propose a Stoic reply to this criticism, but at this point I forego further descent into the dialectic. For we have gone far enough to extract what we need concerning the inferential role of the concept at work here. Summing up what we have learned so far we can conclude at least this much: *Oikeiosis* is a foundational concept in Stoic psychology and ethics.[26] It is held to be a psychological fact of direct ethical significance. *Oikeiosis* underlies and explains an organism's innate concern for its own preservation, but it also expands to incorporate more and more within its appropriated domain. In this sense it involves both a relation (to oneself and to things in one's environment) and a process (whereby the sphere of concern expands). Unless interrupted *Oikeiosis* can progressively expand to incorporate the whole human domain. From the outset it provides normative guidance in action, informing an appreciation for the difference between harmful and beneficial endeavors. It involves a distinctive form of 'being-at-home' or familiarity (as contrasted to a state of alienation or estrangement) with oneself and with one's environment. And it is used to motivate a form of cosmopolitanism in which one is held to be properly 'at home' in the human sphere as a whole.

§3 *Oikeiosis*, Pleasure and Desire

I turn now to a second Stoic argument, and at the same time from Greek to Roman Stoic sources. Our source in this instance is Cicero's *de Finibus*; the argument emerges in the context of Stoic attempts to refute Epicurean moral psychology. This dispute is of considerable interest in its own right, but it will also bring into sharper view an important further dimension of *Oikeiosis* – what one might even call its proto-transcendental role -- and it will bring us into closer proximity to the Stoic conception of *Oikeiosis* as involving a form of self-consciousness.

Cicero himself was not a Stoic; indeed he was among the fiercest critics of Stoic teachings. Nonetheless his account of Stoic doctrine in *de Finibus* remains one of the most complete extant statements of Stoic philosophy, and seems to have been composed with the benefit of direct knowledge of a number of Greek Stoic sources that have now been lost. Its importance also derives from the fact that in it Cicero systematically and quite deliberately undertakes the task of rendering Greek philosophical terminology in Latin. *De Finibus* is constructed as a series of dialogues in which the teachings of each of the predominant Hellenistic schools (Epicureanism, Stoicism. Skepticism) are systematically expounded and assessed.

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[25] This line of criticism seems to have been pioneered by Carneades. For an analysis see Striker 1991, 50-61. The proposed elaboration of the 'case of the two sailors' is due to Long [find cite].
[26] Add a note here about Striker's qualified rejection of this thesis.

Books III and IV are devoted to Stoic teachings, with Cato in the role of enthusiastic expounder of Stoicism while Cicero himself acts first as cooperative audience and then as vehement critic. The third book contains Cato's exposition of Stoicism; Book IV develops Cicero's refutation.

The context in which the doctrine of *Oikeiosis* first appears in *de Finibus* is significant. Book III opens with some stage-setting and unsystematic sparring about Stoic doctrines, particularly as regards Stoic claims to originality and regarding the core Stoic claim that virtue is sufficient to happiness. However, Cato soon proposes that a more systematic exposition is required – a proposal to which his interlocutor readily agrees. The narrative voice says simply "He began," and there follows Cato's statement, now in Ciceronian Latin, of Stoic theory. I recount the dramatic set-up because it bears directly upon our topic. For the very first concept Cato introduces is the notion of *Oikeiosis*:

> [Cato:] It is the view of those whose system I adopt that immediately upon birth (for that is the proper point to start from) a living creature feels an attachment to itself, and an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution and for those things which tend to preserve that constitution; while on the other hand it conceives an antipathy to destruction and to those things which appear to threaten destruction.

So far this is familiar territory; indeed it is effectively a translation into the new Latin vocabulary of the doctrine Diogenes had reported from Chrysippus. *Oikeiosis* is now rendered in the elaborate phrase: *sibi concilari et commendari ad se conservandum* -- an impulse to preserve itself and to feel affection for its own constitution. And what in the Greek had been simply "*ta oikeia*" is here 'things which tend to preserve one's constitution.' [*suum statum eaque quae conservantia sunt eius status*]. There may seem to be a difference in the scope of the thesis: Chryssipus had applied it to animals but the text here refers to 'all living creatures'. But this is an artifact of Rackham's translation; the Latin is simply '*animal*'. Certainly the core claim as to the innateness of the principle remains the central emphasis.

But as Cato's exposition proceeds we encounter a deployment of *Oikeiosis* in an inferential context that we have not yet considered. Having stated the Stoic doctrine, Cato immediately sets out to justify it.

> In proof of this opinion they urge that infants desire things conducive to their health and reject things that are the opposite before they have ever felt pleasure or pain; this would not be the case, unless they felt an affection for their own constitution and were afraid of destruction. But it would be impossible that they should feel desire at all unless they possessed self-consciousness, and consequently felt affection for themselves. This leads to the conclusion that it is love of self which supplies the primary impulse to action.

Cato's proposed proof is tantalizing but also frustratingly underdeveloped; Long has called it "an argument of lightening brevity." The first thing to note is its dialectical context. Cato sets out to prove his thesis not from first principles but in a kind of determinate negation of its main contemporary rival. That rival, of course, is the core thesis of Epicurean psychology: the claim that the overarching motive in human endeavor is the desire for pleasure. Cato tackles this claim in the context of what Brunschwig has called "cradle arguments" – the disputes between the two schools as to the psychological traits of newborns, whom Epicurus himself had famously described as "mirrors of nature."

How is Cato's proof to be reconstructed? The answer is far from clear. At least part of the argument seems to turn on what we would now call an empirical claim. In his attempt to forestall the Epicurean claim that we are all born pleasure-seekers, Cato seems to deny that newborn infants experience pleasure or pain. This is, to say the least, a surprising claim by modern lights, and it is tempting to dismiss it as a historically revealing but philosophically uninteresting artifact of Ancient attitudes about babies. But this would be to miss something important. Notice first that Cato's denial of newborn pain and pleasure is framed in a comparison: prior to the experience of pleasure or pain comes "the desire for things conducive to their health." This may not be enough to win us over to Cato's neonatological thesis, but we should not mistake it for an image of newborns as somehow less-than-fully alive. On the contrary, newborns in Cato's account are already quite sophisticated agents.

Elements of Cato's reasoning come into focus when read in light of an image found in the Greek Stoic sources: the image of pleasure as a flower or bloom which makes its appearance only after an organism has satisfied its needs. The infant, to take up the lead from this metaphor, would never have the good fortune to experience pleasure unless it was endowed with a disposition which leads it to fulfill the vital needs from whose satisfaction pleasure 'blooms'. The contention against Epicureans is that a nested set of psychological conditions must already be in place before pleasure can be encountered and found desirable. The basic condition, already immediately at work in the newborn, is the feeling of affection for and implicit understanding of the organism's own constitution and what preserves it. This is the core state of *Oikeiosis*. This state manifests itself in the infant's disposition to seek things conducive to its health and to eschew the opposite. It is only as an effect of all this that the infant comes to feel pleasure -- as an outcome of a causal sequence made possible by this underlying state. Hence the surprising thesis: infants do not experience pleasure *ab initio*, but encounter it only as a pleasurable downstream effect of a prior motivational condition. In the case of infants this whole process may unfold very quickly, as the first instincts very quickly produce the first pleasures. But the key point for Cato is that the instinct must come first, with the pleasure to follow only as its dependent effect. A version of this line of argument can be found in Diogenes, and it is in close keeping with Cicero's own attack on Epicurean psychology in *de Finibus* II.[27]

We have not yet taken the full measure of Cato's proof, but it is worth pausing to take stock. I do not take a stand here as to whether the argument we have extracted so far suffices as a refutation of

[27] For a Greek statement of this argument see Diogenes *Lives,* VII, 86: "As for the assertion made by some people that pleasure is the object to which the first impulse of animals is directed, it is shown by the Stoics to be false. For pleasure, if it is really felt, they declare to be a by-product, which never comes until nature by itself has sought and found the means suitable to the animal's existence or constitution; it is an aftermath comparable to the condition of animals thriving and plants in full bloom." Cicero's rejection of Epicurean hedonism about infants is stated as follows: "In fact the young are not moved by nature to seek pleasure but simply to love themselves and to keep themselves safe and sound. Every living creature, as soon as it is born, loves both itself and all its parts. It cherishes above all its two major components, namely mind and body, and then the parts of each, Both mind and body possess certain excellences. At first these are dimly perceived, then incipiently distinguished, with the result that nature's primary attributes are sought and the contraries rejected." Cicero, *de Finibus* II, 33; Annas translation.

Epicurean cradle arguments, though I do think that it raises a challenge to be taken seriously. But what our reconstruction does exhibit is an important further dimension to the Stoic notion of *Oikeiosis*. To this point we have characterized *Oikeiosis* as a motive, as a relation, and as a process; what we now see is that *Oikeiosis* also serves, according to the Stoics, as a condition on other psychological states. This role for *Oikeiosis* receives its most forceful statement in the penultimate claim in Cato's proof: "it would be impossible that they should feel desire at all unless they possessed self-consciousness, and consequently felt affection for themselves." Cato's initial claim had been that *Oikeiosis* must be in place in order for pleasure to occur; here he claims that *Oikeiosis* is the condition on the very possibility of desiring anything at all. With these claims the final element of the inferential role of *Oikeiosis* comes into view. *Oikeiosis* is held to involve some kind of self-consciousness that is a condition on the possibility of desire and is sufficient to ensure self-love.

I shall not yet attempt an interpretation of this puzzling claim; certainly the text provides far less than one might hope by way of explanation or defense of it. But we should take note of the considerable open water that separates Cato's claim from later assumptions about self-consciousness and desire. We tend to think of desire (or appetite – the Latin noun here is *appetitio*; Annas' translation renders it as 'seeking out') as a relatively primitive psychological condition, widely shared in the animal world. Self-consciousness, by contrast, we tend to think of as a much higher-order cognitive achievement, perhaps as the exclusive privilege (or curse?) of human nature, or at most shared only with a few other intelligent mammals. From this modern perspective, Cato's thesis is simply unintelligible. How could the higher order psychological accomplishment serve as the condition on the possibility of the lower order capacity?

§4 Stoic Self-Consciousness

Throughout our encounters with the Stoic notion of *Oikeiosis* we have found it to be developed in close connection with claims about self-consciousness or self-awareness. Having developed a firmer grip on the concept of *Oikeiosis* itself, we can now begin to tackle this issue directly. What kind of self-consciousness did the Stoics hold to be at work in *Oikeiosis*? In a recent discussion of this question, Long has argued that Stoic self-consciousness is aptly understood in terms of the modern notion of proprioception, the quasi-perceptual awareness an organism has of the bearing of its own body.[28] There are some obvious advantages to this line of interpretation: it renders somewhat more palatable the otherwise surprising claim that self-consciousness is present in all animals; and it provides the distinctive form of legitimacy that comes of finding a respectable modern equivalent for an ancient doctrine. But while Long's

[28] Long, A.A., "Hierocles on *Oikeiosis* and Self-Perception" in Boudouris (ed.), *Hellenistic Philosophy* (Athens: International Association For Greek Philosophy, 1993), 93-104; reprinted in Long, A.A., *Stoic Studies* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996), 250-263.

thesis is not all-wrong, it is not all right either. Or so I shall argue here. To make out this case I turn to a relatively late Stoic source: the letters of Seneca. Seneca's Stoicism is far less systematic than that we find articulated in Cicero or even in the fragments from Stobaeus. (The dust jackets of the Loeb edition describe his writings as "more clever than profound".) But for our purposes he is a crucial figure, both because of his role in transmitting Stoic ideas to later European traditions, and because he provides the most direct and extensive consideration of the Stoic thesis that *Oikeiosis* is or involves self-consciousness.

By tradition, Seneca's 121st letter to Lucilius carries the title, "On Instinct in Animals", although in Seneca's original it bears only the heading: "*Seneca Lvcilio svo salvtem*." Seneca's letters take many forms: some are meditations, some exhortations to Lucilius on some moral matter or another, a few take the form of abstract philosophical expositions. But the letter on instinct recounts and revisits a dispute. After two paragraphs of preliminaries, the disputed thesis comes out into the open: "*We were once debating whether all animals had any feelings about their constitution*."[29] Seneca himself describes this as a 'little question' [*quaestiunculam*], in contrast to the correspondingly large questions over which Lucilius has reportedly been pressing him ("Prove to me that felicity is fickle and empty"; "How can I crave less and fear less?" …). But Seneca also hints that this little question may be of considerable significance, pertaining to "the nature and origin of character."

Seneca's own answer to the disputed 'little question' is clearly affirmative and is stated explicitly at the outset of the fourth paragraph: "*So all these animals have a consciousness of their physical constitution … .*"[30] The precise scope of this claim is not entirely clear, but over the course of the letter Seneca discusses cats, hawks, chickens, peacocks, turtles, bees and spiders, including thereby not only mammals, birds, reptiles and insects but both animals long celebrated for their intelligence and others notorious for their stupidity. In the main body of the letter Seneca defends his thesis, first by proposing a positive proof, then with replies to a series of objections. The positive proof is grounded in observations about the behavior of animals. The three replies in turn dispatch an Epicurean explanation of the same phenomenon, reply to the charge that Stoics have over-intellectualized animal and child behavior, and deal with a challenge pertaining to personal identity over time.

To modern ears, Seneca's arguments curiously combine prescient scientific hypothesis and striking *non sequitur*. In his reply to the Epicureans, Seneca argues forcefully and resourcefully against attempts to explain animal behavior as entirely learned from experience. On the contrary, Seneca argues,

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[29] Seneca, *Epistles* 121, 5; emphasis added. I'm not entirely happy with Gummere's translation. Here is the Latin: "*Quaerebamus, an esset omnibus animalibus constitutionis suae sensus?*" More literally: "We were asking whether every animal has a sense for its constitution."

[30] "*Ergo omnibus constitutionis suae sensus est … .*" Seneca, *Epistles* 121, 9; emphasis added. It is worth registering an observation about the syntax of Seneca's "*sensus*," which I find myself hard-pressed to explain. Gummere's translation has Seneca asking whether animals "have a feeling" and answering that they "have a consciousness." The noun is the same in both cases: *sensus*. But Seneca's verb in each case is a form of *esse*, to be. So it would it perhaps be a bit more literal to cast his thesis thus: "Everything is sensible of its own constitution." But '*sensus'* is a noun. I can find no easy English equivalent for this syntactical form, but I may well be overlooking some feature of the Latin grammatical structure.

core elements of that behavior must be acknowledged as both innate and species-specific. The affinity of Seneca's position on this point with modern biological accounts has not escaped attention. Gummere calls Seneca's nativist thesis "sound and modern"; Long and Sedley treat it as "an attempt, and an interesting one, to do justice to data which would now be explained by reference to natural selection and genetic coding."[31]

But Seneca's positive argument will seem much less compelling to a modern audience. His main positive evidence for animal self-consciousness is the 'apt and expedient' bodily skills animals exhibit, an agility he compares to some stock examples of skillful behavior in the crafts:

> That this is the case is proved particularly by their making motions of such fitness and nimbleness [*apte et expedite movent*] that they seem to be trained [*erudite*] for the purpose. Every being is clever [*agilitas est*] in its own line. The skilled workman handles his tools with an ease born of experience; the pilot knows how to steer his ship skillfully; the artist can quickly lay on the colors which he has prepared in great variety for the purpose of rendering the likeness, and passes with ready eye and hand from palette to canvas. In the same way an animal is agile in all that pertains to the use of its body.[32]

Seneca's claim seems to be that the similar phenomena must have a similar cause. Since artisan agility is the product of intimate knowledge of the tools and materials that are so aptly handled, Seneca concludes that animal agility must be an expression of an analogous familiarity with that which animals handle so adeptly – that is, their own bodies. The difference is that while an artisan's knowledge of his tools is acquired through training and experience, an animal's bodily self-knowledge is part of its innate endowment:

> But that which art gives to the craftsman, is given to the animal by nature. No animal handles its limbs with difficulty, no animal is at a loss how to use its body. This function they exercise immediately at birth. They come into the world with this knowledge [*scientia*]; they are born full-trained.[33]

To rely on this line of argument is to find oneself squeezed from both sides of the modern debates about self-consciousness. Cartesians will certainly deny that any behavioral criterion could suffice to prove self-consciousness, which is something that can be established only by and for the self-conscious being itself. No amount of animal agility could suffice to demonstrate that animals have an inner conscious life. But Descartes' modern critics will find the Stoic argument no more palatable, since they will simply deny that self-consciousness or self-awareness is needed to explain 'apt and expedient' animal behavior. Such behavior can be assumed to be hardwired for survival, without requiring any kind of psychic self-presence. So from both sides of the standard divide, Seneca's argument looks to be a plain *non sequitur*. Before putting this down to Seneca's failings as a philosopher, however, we should once again insure against anachronism by deploying our inferentialist approach. If Seneca confidently relies on an argument that is

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[31] Gummere (editor and translator), Seneca's *Epistles 93-124* (Cambridge: Loeb, 1925, 2000), 406n; Long and Sedley, I, 351.
[32] Seneca, *Epistles* 121, 5-6.
[33] Seneca, *Epistles* 121, 6.

plainly fallacious when interpreted in modern terms, then perhaps this indicates that he means something quite different by 'self-consciousness' than we moderns do.

So what, exactly, does Seneca mean to attribute to animals? As is often the case at such junctures, there is less to go on in the sources than one would like. The closest Seneca comes to addressing this issue directly comes in his reply to the second objection, which charges that the Stoics have over-intellectualized animal psychology. Interestingly, the turf on which the dispute unfolds shifts at this point from animal to child psychology.

> But some object as follows: "According to your account, one's constitution consists of a ruling power in the soul which has a certain relation towards the body. But how can a child comprehend this intricate and subtle principle, which I can scarcely explain even to you? All living creatures should be born logicians, so as to understand a definition which is obscure to the majority of Roman citizens!"[34]

In defending the Stoic thesis from this objection, Seneca sets out to clarify the self-conscious self-knowledge that is at issue. The first crucial point to notice is the specification of the *object* of self-consciousness. What is known in self-consciousness is said to be "the constitution" of the organism. This is feature of the Stoic position that we can see at work throughout the tradition. In the position attributed to Chryssipus, animal self-consciousness is said to be of "of its own constitution" [*auton sustasis*]; Cicero renders this term both as *status* and as *constitutio*, which is the term found in Seneca. Seneca's text explains what is meant by this. An animal's constitution is said to be its ruling power or principle. It is that part of the animal's nature that determines how it is to behave, how its parts interact properly, and ultimately how it is to preserve itself and thrive. Hence in attributing innate self-consciousness to all animals, the Stoics are attributing a form of *practical self-comprehension*. Already with this first point we can mark the first fundamental difference between Stoic and Cartesian self-consciousness. Whereas Cartesian self-consciousness is first and foremost a knowledge of my existence, and specifically of my psychological existence, Stoic self-consciousness is a form of *bodily comprehension* – not a knowledge that I exist but an understanding of what kind of thing I am, and specifically of what kind of body I have and what befits it.

But what kind of understanding is this, exactly, such that it might plausibly be attributed to newborns, children and animals? In replying to his critic, Seneca is at pains to distinguish sharply between this self-conscious self-understanding and the kind of understanding that might be possessed by a zoologist or a psychologist. By comparison to an explicit scientific specification of an organism's constitution, our innate self-understanding is described as "confused, cursory and dark" [*crasse, summatim et obscure*]; it is "not very clearly outlined or portrayed" [*non satis dilucidus nec expressus*]. Moreover, it doesn't provide the animal or child with "a definition of his constitution" [*constitutionis finitionem*], either in the sense of providing explicit definitions of the sort that one would expect in a zoological theory or in the sense of

[34] Seneca, *Epistles* 121, 10.

establishing the precise limits of its kind. In short, it is an *implicit and inarticulate self-understanding*, in contrast to the explicit account one might aim for in science.

But there is a further mark of this distinctive self-comprehension that will be particularly important to us in what follows, and this pertains to the term both Cicero and Seneca use in describing self-consciousness. It is a *sensus*. As Seneca writes here: "he [the animal] does not know what 'a living organism' is, but he *feels* [*sentit*] that he is an animal." The self-knowledge provided in self-consciousness is not what a later tradition would call a discursive representation; its medium is not conceptual. Indeed Seneca insists that neither the animal nor the child understand what a constitution is, though they do understand their own constitutions. In other words, animals and children are said to lack the concept of that which they comprehend. It is in their attempts to name this distinctive form of *non-conceptual knowledge* that the Roman Stoics use the term *sensus*. We might get at this by saying that the medium of self-consciousness is not ideas but sensations or feelings, but here again we must tread carefully. For Stoic *sensus* must not be confused with the sensations and impressions of the later empiricist tradition. It should be clear that it is not a bare conscious content – what is nowadays called a *qualia*. For it has both a cognitive and a practical dimension that mere sensations lack. Neither is it a narrowly psychological state, if this is meant to be contrasted to a state of one's body. Stoic *sensus* is a discriminating bodily self-comprehension that immediately guides and controls one's actions and provides orientation and agility in one's endeavors.

In sum, we can say that the self-consciousness Seneca attributes to animals and young children is an implicit, non-discursive understanding of one's own body and of that which preserves it, informing an ability to find significant differences among the various available courses of endeavor. How does this conception of self-consciousness compare to later accounts? It should be clear from this that the self-consciousness that figures in Seneca's Stoicism differs down the line from that which concerns Descartes. It is not explicit or discursive self-representation but a comprehending sentiment of oneself; it is not knowledge of one's own psychological state but of one's bodily constitution; it is not narrowly factual but immediately normative. The claim is not that animals enjoy a conscious self-presence or an inner life, but that they have an innate self-comprehension that provides them with an implicit answer to the question, "what kind of thing am I?" And its main role is not to underwrite the knowledge that I exist but rather the understanding of what I ought to do.

But it should also now be clear that Stoic self-consciousness is not to be equated with proprioception either, although proprioception might indeed be said to be an essential aspect of this form of self-comprehension, and it does contribute to the characteristic agility and even grace of animal movements, which is just what Seneca set out to explain. But Long is wrong in equating the two. The key point is that proprioception, as it is typically defined, involves neither the self-comprehension nor the normative discrimination that is central to Stoic self-consciousness. In short, it informs me as to the position of my body; it does not tell me what I ought to do with it. Moreover, proprioception does not to

play the role that Cato had claimed for self-consciousness as a condition on the possibility of desire. For it is plain that trauma victims who have lost proprioceptive capacities due to paralysis are still quite able to experience desire. So if it is neither Cartesian self-consciousness nor proprioception then what is it? If we are looking for a modern equivalent, I shall argue, the closest we shall find is the notion of conscience.

Before shifting to the modern era, however, it is worth briefly revisiting Cato's provocative thesis about self-consciousness and desire. As we saw, Cicero has Cato claim that self-consciousness serves as a condition on the possibility of desiring anything at all. A similarly proto-transcendental claim is found in Seneca's letter.[35] I cannot pretend to understand Cato's puzzling thesis fully, nor to know how the Stoics he represents might have defended it. But at the very least we can now see what might motivate it, and thereby disperse some of the sense of its unintelligibility. The key lies in understanding the distinctive structure and function of Stoic self-consciousness, and particularly the role it plays in providing an organism with normative orientation in its environment. To desire or 'have an appetite' for something presupposes that we have some way of distinguishing between what seems worth pursuing and what is to be avoided -- predator from prey, nourishment from toxin, even pleasure from pain. Without some such capacity for discrimination desire could have no determinate content and could provide no guidance in action. On the Stoic view, such distinctions are essentially kind-relative, hence the capacity to draw them must be grounded in an incipient understanding of one's kind or nature. As we have seen, it is just such a self-understanding that the Stoics see as the central deliverance of self-consciousness.[36]

§5 Rousseau's Debt to the Stoics

In the space remaining I take up – albeit all too briefly – the legacy of the Stoic conception of self-consciousness in the modern period, particularly in the work of Rousseau. My leap from Seneca to Rousseau is historically irresponsible, and indeed much of considerable significance in the reception of the *Oikeiosis* doctrine is thereby passed over without the attention it deserves. (Notably, the Augustinian tradition looked to the doctrine of *Oikeiosis* for a secular confirmation of the Judeo-Christian doctrine of original sin, while Hugo Grotius found in it the makings of a thoroughly secular account of justice.[37]) My

[35] "[A]ll animals possess a consciousness of their own constitutions [*omnia animalia constitutionis suae sensus est*]. … [T]hey must necessarily feel this [*Necesse est enim id sentiant*], because it is the same agency by which they feel [*sentiunt*] other things also; they must necessarily have a feeling [*sensum habeant*] of the principle which they obey and by which they are controlled." Seneca, *Epistles* 121, 12.

[36] Obviously more work is required in trying to assess this claim, and to probe its significance in the Stoic argument against Epicurean psychology. Much comes to turn, I suspect, on how one understands the nature of pleasure and pain, and how one makes sense of their significance in motivation. This is a topic to which I hope to return.

[37] For a useful orientation in this part of the history see William Bouwsma, "Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustianism in Renaissance Thought" in *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 9-73.

discussion focuses on Rousseau, however, since it is in Rousseau that we find the richest modern development of the doctrine of *Oikeiosis* specifically in connection with the theory of self-consciousness.

Rousseau did not explicitly endorse Stoic doctrines, and indeed the scattered explicit mentions of Stoicism in his corpus are uniformly negative, sometimes scathingly so. In one letter he warns his correspondent not to "exaggerate matters beyond the truth, nor to confound, as the Stoics did, happiness with virtue."[38] In *Émile*, we find him questioning the notoriously restrictive Stoic account of the constituents of the good: "Why would I want to be Cato, who disembowels himself, rather than Caesar triumphant?"[39] It is perhaps because of this explicit distancing from central Stoic doctrines that Rousseau's debt to Stoicism has not received much attention in the considerable literature that has recently been devoted to his work. When it comes to Rousseau's debt to Seneca – which is what shall mainly concern us here -- the scholarship has been remarkably silent. Timothy O'Hagan makes no mention of Seneca in his "Arguments of the Philosophers" book.[40] The same is true of Nicholas Dent's earlier treatment.[41] Robert Wolker mentions Seneca in connection with Rousseau, but only in a long catalog of influences including "Montesquieu, Fénelon, Montaigne, … , Plato and … Plutarch."[42] Even the classic studies of Rousseau by Ernst Cassirer are largely silent on this dimension of Rousseau's relation to the tradition.[43] Indeed, with one or two notable exceptions, the scholarship on Rousseau has focused much more on his considerable influence (e.g., on Kant, Hegel, Marx and Freud) than on his influences.[44]

In light of this neglect by the scholars and abuse from Rousseau himself, an attempt to read Rousseau's philosophy as a contribution to Stoic theory requires a few words of justification. The relevant evidence is not far to seek. Perhaps the best emblem for Rousseau's rich borrowing from the Stoic tradition comes in the motto he uses for *Émile*, which is widely acknowledged as his *magnum opus*. Rousseau there quotes Seneca (in Latin), using a passage from the essay "On Anger":

> We are sick with evils that can be cured; and nature, having brought us forth sound, itself helps us if we wish to be improved.[45]

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[38] Rousseau to M. D'Offreville, 4 October, 1761; *Correspondance Générale de J.-J. Rousseau* (Paris, A. Colin, 1924-34) VI: 227, translation in Horowitz 1987, 144.
[39] *Émile: or On Education*, introduction, translation and notes by Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 287.
[40] O'Hagan, Timothy (1999): *Rousseau* (London: Routledge).
[41] Dent, N.J.H. (1988): *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Psychological, Social and Political Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell).
[42] Wokler, Robert (1995): *Rousseau* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 20.
[43] Cassirer, Ernst (1945): *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Cassirer, Ernst (1932): "Das Problem Jean-Jacques Rousseau"; *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* XLI, 177-213, 479-513; edited and translated by Peter Gay as *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1963).
[44] Some exceptions: Jean Starobinski: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La Transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: Gallimard), translated as *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). Brooke, Christopher (2001): "Rousseau's Political Philosophy: Stoic and Augustinian Origins"; in Patrick Riley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*. Two recent essays by A.O. Rorty explicitly address Rousseau's engagement with Stoicism: "Rousseau's Therapeutic Experiments", *Philosophy* (1991), 1-22; "The Two Faces of Stoicism in Rousseau and Freud", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996), 335-56. Perhaps the most important exception is the unduly neglected (and uncompleted) study by Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas: *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1935). There are many passing references to Rousseau in this massive study, but sadly the projected companion volume exploring Enlightenment primitivism was never completed.
[45] The passage is taken from Seneca, *de Ira* II, 13; this translation is due to Bloom: *Émile*, 481n2.

What we should notice here is not simply Rousseau's explicit acknowledgement of Seneca in a place of such prominence in his corpus, but more importantly how this single sentence from a Stoic source manages to encapsulate so many of the most important themes of Rousseau's philosophical endeavors. Mankind has somehow grown ill, but this illness is not its original condition nor need it be its final one; nature itself is a beneficent power, and if properly understood can be used to guide us back to health; man is not originally corrupt but naturally good (we are 'brought forth sound'). These are of course the central themes of Rousseau's *Discourses*, and they are elaborated in considerable detail in *Émile* itself, often against a prevailing Christian orthodoxy. It is thus of considerable significance that Rousseau here effectively acknowledges their Stoic provenance. Moreover, in each of these areas we can see Rousseau as not only taking up Stoic ideas, but also developing and advancing them. The Stoics, for instance, were committed to the claim that most human beings are corrupted, alienated from their natural condition. Yet their account of how that corruption occurs, and why this departure from nature is so widespread among humans, is disappointingly thin, at least among the extant sources. Where the Stoics were content to put human corruption down to false judgments concerning the value of pleasure and worldly goods, Rousseau provides a much richer and psychologically more compelling account of mankind's fall from its natural goodness. And within *Émile* itself Rousseau sets out to provide a detailed account of the "natural cure" which he invokes in Seneca's name.

Émile is of course a mature work, but no brief on Rousseau's debt to Stoicism can be complete without mentioning his very first publications, particularly the notorious prize-winning *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*. The *Discourse* may have shocked some of its original readers with its denunciation of the arts and sciences as corrupting influences in human civilization. But some among his original audience recognized that the piece was far from original. Once again Seneca was a key source; indeed Rousseau's unacknowledged borrowing from the Seneca's *Letters* is sufficiently far-reaching that he might well be convicted of plagiarism if he turned in the *Discourse* as a homework assignment at NYU. Both in his iconoclastic thesis and in the methods he uses to advance it, Rousseau follows the lead of Seneca's 88th Letter ("On Liberal and Vocational Studies"). Both authors challenge the prevailing assumption that the study of liberal arts and science is morally beneficial; both seek to taint the sciences by associating them individually with particular vices; both make a prominent exception for ethics and moral psychology, which is equated by each with philosophy itself, properly understood. Indeed, reading each author in translation, even the well-informed reader may have trouble assigning specific passages to one author or the other – a remarkable fact given that the two works are separated by 1700 years.[46] At one point in the

[46] Consider this pair of passages: "The mathematician teaches me to lay out the dimensions of my estate, but I should rather be taught to lay out what is enough for a man to own. He teaches me to count, and adapts my fingers to avarice." "Astronomy was born of superstition, eloquence of hatred, flattery, lying, geometry of avarice, physics of vain curiosity; all of them, even moral philosophy, of human pride. Thus the sciences and the arts owe their birth to our vices …" The former is from Seneca, the latter from Rousseau, but the attributions could just as easily be reversed.

Discourse Rousseau quotes Seneca directly, ("Since learned men began to appear among us … good people have slipped away."), though he does not cite his source.[47]

A final note on this topic: although Rousseau's borrowings from Seneca may no longer attract much interest or attention, the debt was recognized and disputed in the furor occasioned by the *Discourse* on its first appearance in the *Mercure de France*. In the months following its anonymous publication, the *Mercure* was filled with rebuttals (including one from the King of Poland![48]), and one of those who rose to refute the *Discourse* complained of its abuse of Stoic sources. Canon Joseph Gautier delivered his rebuttal of the *Discourse* at a meeting of the Royal Society of Nancy, and subsequently published it the October 1751 issue of the *Mercure*. In it he identifies the source of Rousseau's unattributed quote, and goes on to argue that Rousseau had unwittingly outflanked the author whose authority he had sought, as even Seneca had at least allowed that "literature is a preparation for virtue."[49] In one of Rousseau's several public replies to his critics he again quotes Seneca without attribution, this time rather bitterly: "A good mind does not need a literary culture."[50]

From all this it seems clear, then, that Rousseau knew the Stoics, and particularly Seneca's moral essays and letters, and that he found much to sympathize with in them -- critical remarks about Stoicism notwithstanding. In light of this link, I turn now to consider what he may have taken from the Stoics specifically regarding the problem of self-consciousness.

§6 Rousseau's Stoic Account of Self-Consciousness

Are there recognizably Stoic elements in Rousseau's approach to self-consciousness? Does he advance the Stoic account in any way? These are large questions, but in pursuing them I shall focus somewhat myopically on a pair of sources and a pair of Rousseauian doctrines. The most significant of these comes from *Émile*, but I consider first an doctrine from the Second Discourse, *On the Origin of Inequality*. The Second Discourse is of course Rousseau's state of nature narrative, presenting his account of an idyllic state of nature and mankind's subsequent fall from grace under conditions of civilization. I shall not here attempt to document its various loans from Seneca, though these are considerable.[51] What I

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[47] The remark is found in Seneca's 95th letter to Lucilius ('On the Usefulness of Basic Principles'): "*Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt*" (Seneca, *Epistles* 95, 13); for Rousseau's use of it see Masters and Kelly (eds.), *The Collected Writings of Rousseau* (University Press of New England), II, 10-11.

[48] King Stanislaus' reply to Rousseau was published anonymously in the *Mercure* in September, 1751, and was only later attributed to the monarch. For an English edition see *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, II, 28-36.

[49] Joseph Gautier, "Refutation of the Discourse which Won the Prize of the Academy of Dijon in 1750"; translation from *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, II, 81.

[50] *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, II, 127. The quote in this instance is from Seneca's 106th letter.

[51] The Second Discourse borrows heavily from Seneca's 90th Letter ("On the Part Played by Philosophy in the Progress of Man"); Rousseau's notorious claim about private property echoes Seneca's remark on this topic in the 88th Letter: "Who owned the land before your grandfather? Can you explain what people (I will not say what person) held it originally? You did not enter it as a master but merely as a tenant. And whose tenant are you? The lawyers say that

wish to focus on is a doctrine that Rousseau presents in the first Part of the Discourse, in the passages where he sets out to catalogue the features – physical, moral, and metaphysical – of what he calls 'original man,' 'savage man,' or simply 'natural man.' Rousseau there famously emphasizes the animal-like quality of man's original existence. Here is a representative passage:

> His desires do not exceed his physical needs, the only goods he knows in the Universe are nourishment, a female, and repose; the only evils he fears are pain and hunger. I say pain and not death because an animal will never know what it is to die.[52]

He also notoriously insists on the unreflective character of man's original existence: "I almost dare to affirm that the state of reflection is a state contrary to nature and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal."[53]

One might have thought, given this kind of view, that Rousseau's original man would also be lacking in self-consciousness or self-awareness. His attention is taken up with the objects of his modest desires and fears; he sleeps whenever there is nothing pressing to keep him awake; he is unconcerned by the prospect of his mortality or the complications of society or enduring relations; he lacks our own 'depraved' reflectiveness …; there would seem to be little room in this picture for self-consciousness. But it soon becomes clear that there is a place for self-consciousness, at least of a certain kind. Twice in the opening pages of the Discourse, first in the body of Part I, and then again at the outset of Part II, Rousseau claims that original man is possessed of a sentiment or feeling for his own existence. Indeed he claims that this is the first and initially the only sentiment of natural man: "*Man's first sentiment was that of his existence … .*"[54] And again: "*His soul, agitated by nothing, is given over to the sole sentiment of its present existence*."[55] So what kind of self-consciousness or self-awareness is being attributed here?

Given the work we have done so far, the answer is not hard to discern. For it soon becomes clear that the self-consciousness Rousseau attributes to natural man is much more the self-consciousness of the Stoics than that of the modern tradition so shaped by Cartesianism. A first sign of this can be found in the language Rousseau uses to describe this original self-consciousness; it is described as a sentiment [*sentiment*], a term that figures centrally in Rousseau's moral psychology. The connection between Rousseau's *sentiment* and Seneca's *sensus* is more than merely etymological. A Rousseauian sentiment (fear and pity are two other examples) combines a form of awareness and a form of evaluation or concern. To feel pity for someone, for instance, is both to be vividly aware of them *and* to feel moved by their plight. The self-sentiment of original man is thus a self-awareness that takes the form of a self-concern. This feature is brought out immediately in the continuation of the passage just cited:

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public property cannot be acquired privately by possession; what you hold and call your own is public property – indeed it belongs to mankind at large." I am grateful to Ivo Gatzinski on this point.

[52] *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, III, 27.

[53] *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, III, 23.

[54] *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, III, 43, emphasis added.

[55] *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, III, 28, emphasis added.

> Man's first sentiment was that of his own existence; his first concern was that of his preservation. The products of the earth provided him with all the help he needed; instinct led him to make use of them.[56]

We should recognize here the pattern we found to be characteristic of the Stoic concept of *Oikeiosis*: self-awareness is a self-concern manifested in self-comprehending, self-preserving instincts. And like the Stoics, Rousseau casts this form of 'sentimental' self-awareness as a fundamental feature even of an otherwise animal-like existence. Already in the Second Discourse, then, where Rousseau first presents the fundamentals of his philosophical anthropology, we can see that in thinking about self-consciousness he follows in the grooves established by Stoicism, much more so than those established in the Cartesian tradition. He does not treat self-consciousness as an epistemic certainty of one's mental representations, but rather as a sentiment of and for one's existence.[57] It is not a form of inner presence or a product of higher-order reflection but a primitive endowment of man in his animal state. It is not a motivationally inert self-representation but immediately underwrites an instinctive form of self-concern leading to self-preserving endeavors. In all this we can see Rousseau as sustaining the Stoic approach within the modern period.

The final exhibit I wish to introduce in assembling my historical argument comes from Rousseau's *Creed of the Savoyard Vicar*. This once notorious text has now grown obscure, so I preface my analysis with a few introductory words about this unique chapter of Rousseau's corpus. The Creed appears in Book Four of *Émile*, where the narrative voice of the work (Émile's tutor, Jean-Jacques) recalls his encounter, many years earlier, with a defrocked priest. The Creed itself is presented as a lengthy direct recounting of the priest's highly unorthodox "Profession of Faith." Rousseau knew the piece would cause a scandal, and so carefully contrives an authorial distance from the views the Savoyard priest recounts: they are presented as a report by a fictionalized character (the tutor) on a conversation with yet another fictionalized character (the Vicar), who himself goes out of his way to insist that he is only reporting on his own views, not seeking to convert anyone else to them. In what follows, however, I shall assume that this distance is largely a literary contrivance as part of Rousseau's failed attempt to circumvent the powerful French censors, and that the position of the Creed is in all its essentials Rousseau's own.

Upon its first publication, the Creed occasioned considerable controversy. *Émile* was published at the same time as *The Social Contract*, yet of the two works it was not the intensely anti-monarchical political philosophy that led to Rousseau's troubles with the authorities; it was *Émile*, and specifically the portion of *Émile* in which the priest presents his creed. Reading the text now, it can be hard to see what the fuss was about, and indeed the Creed has come to languish in relative obscurity even while other parts of Rousseau's corpus are taught regularly and have become major targets of scholarly analysis. For at a first read the priest's faith seems to be little more than a not-particularly-penetrating statement of a rather

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[56] *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, III, 43.

[57] I think that Rousseau would in fact deny that we have self-certainty as to our own psychological states, but to show this requires a more extensive consideration of his conception of confession than is possible here.

standard deistic position. The priest claims to present a 'natural religion' (i.e., a faith that does not depend on the authority of revelation), starting with a not-very-persuasive statement of the teleological argument for the existence of God. The creed does present some pointed criticisms of the authority of revelation that may have been scandalous at the time, but these pale in comparison to the criticisms of revelation that would appear before the century's end. In fact what caused the trouble with the censor was probably not the theology of the Creed (deism was certainly nothing new in France by 1762) but its rather passionate closing plea for religious tolerance. Toleration of religious difference was not an acceptable political position to hold under Louis XV; in advocating so directly for it the Creed crossed a legal line that yet another radical theology or political philosophy could not.

In retrospect, the part of the creed that is of the most philosophical significance comes in a passage near the end – sandwiched between the deistic metaphysics and the political stance on toleration. For having competed his defense of monotheism on teleological grounds, the vicar proceeds to a new set of issues:

> After having thus deduced the principal truths that it mattered for me to know from the impression of sensible objects and from the inner sentiment that leads me to judge of causes according to my natural lights, I still must investigate what manner of conduct I ought to draw from these truths and what rules I ought to prescribe for myself … . (286)[58]

This turn from metaphysics to ethics is significant. After all, if deism is really to fulfill its promise to replace revealed religion with a 'natural religion' then it needs to do more than simply warrant a monotheistic metaphysics. For revealed religions tell us not only what the world is; they also tell the faithful what to do. But it is far from clear how a deistic faith is meant to make this advance from metaphysics to ethics. Once I am convinced that the universe is a giant clock and hence that there must either be or have been a master clock-maker who designed it, how am I meant to use that information to guide or constrain my action? Some of the deists seem to have thought that at least part of the answer was to do natural science, which was purported to bring me nearest to the mind of the designing God.[59] But this hardly substitutes for the rich ethical guidance that is provided by the traditional faiths. So how is a deist supposed to act?

It is in broaching this question that the Vicar's creed comes to bear directly on the themes we have been pursuing. For what we find is that the Vicar's effort toward a deistic ethics is very deeply shaped by Stoic ideas. This is already signaled at the outset of the ethical portion of the Creed, as the Vicar outlines the method he proposes to use for his investigation:

> In continuing to follow my method, I do not draw these rules [of conduct] from the principles of a high philosophy, but find them *written by nature* with ineffaceable characters in the depths of my heart. (286, emphasis added)

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[58] Citations in the remainder of this section refer to the pagination of Bloom's edition of *Émile*; see note 39.
[59] For a discussion of the history of this idea see Max Weber, *Science as Vocation*; translation by Livingstone in Owen and Strong (eds.), *Max Weber: The Vocation Lectures* (Hackett, 2004).

This claim marks the beginning of Rousseau's intricate and artful interweaving of Christian and Stoic themes. The image of moral principles as "written on the walls of men's hearts" is of course an invocation of a Christian theme from the Pauline Epistles. (For the Biblical source, see note 16, above.) But Rousseau subtly Stoicizes the New Testament reference with the phrase "written by nature" [*écrites par la nature*]. As the ethical portion of the creed unfolds, this Stoic theme becomes more and more pronounced. The vicar calls for us to "obey nature" [*Obéissons à la nature*], which is said to speak "with a holy voice" [*la sainte voix de la nature*]. In all this we should hear the echo of the Stoic maxim to 'follow nature.' At the same time we can recognize one of the hallmarks of Rousseau's ethical approach. For in contrast to those traditions which require us to struggle against our nature in order to act morally, Rousseau and his Vicar hold with the Stoics that moral action comes rather by being true to our nature and 'living in accordance with it.'

Having come this far we can zero in on the portion of the Creed of most importance for the history of *Oikeiosis*. Once again we find traces of the concept at work most clearly in the context of a dispute. For the Vicar immediately acknowledges that his ethical naturalism will arouse opposition, and sets out to defend it from two interrelated lines of objection – one crudely Epicurean, the other Skeptical. The first objection rests on the common assumption that to follow nature effectively means to act selfishly and hedonistically, ruthlessly pursuing one's own interests at the expense of others. The priest vigorously criticizes this assumption as a kind of delusion. Reiterating a claim Rousseau elsewhere advances in his own voice, he argues that in fact the reverse is the case. Those who act with a callous unconcern for others can do so by only suppressing their innate beneficence and pity, silencing the concern for others that is part of their native psychological constitution.

> The first of all cares is the care for oneself. Nevertheless how many times does the inner voice tell us that, in doing our good at another's expense, we do wrong! We believe we are following the impulse of nature [in acting selfishly] but we are resisting it. (286)

This in turn introduces the major theme of the Vicar's ethics: the natural authority of conscience, which the Vicar describes as "an innate principle of justice and virtue according to which … we judge our own actions and those of others as good and bad" (289). To follow one's nature, according to the Vicar, is not to act out of narrow self-interest but to hearken to the voice of conscience, a theme which takes the rhetoric of the Creed to its most extravagant heights.[60] But this of course immediately raises the second objection, this time from those who find in conscience an entirely constructed, culturally variable voice. Rousseau associates this position specifically with Montaigne, but it could just as well be attributed to an ancient skeptic or a post-modern moral relativist:

> But at this word [*conscience*] I hear the clamor of those who are allegedly wise rising on all sides: errors of childhood, prejudices of education, they all cry in a chorus. (289)

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[60] "Conscience, Conscience! Divine instinct, immortal and celestial voice, certain guide of a being that is ignorant and limited but intelligent and free; infallible judge of good and bad which makes man like unto God; it is you who makes the excellence of his nature and the morality of his actions" (290).

The skeptical claim here is that conscience is always to be understood as the internalized voice of some Other, whether of my parents, my priest, my teachers, or my peers. In following its lead I follow their prejudices rather than the supposed authority of God or nature.

It is in order to meet this objection that the Vicar embarks on the most distinctive and original portion of his Creed: his attempt to provide a genealogy of conscience. His aim is to defuse the skeptical objection by tracing the lineage of conscience as an innate, natural, and universal psychological endowment. In executing this strategy the Creed's reliance on the doctrine of *Oikeiosis* is unstated but systematic, visible at each step in the Vicar's account. Though we commonly think and talk of conscience as a voice, the Vicar insists that the language it speaks is not one of words or concepts but of feeling and sentiment. "*The acts of conscience are not judgments but sentiments*. … [*W*]*e had sentiments before ideas*." (To apply the language we learned from Seneca, conscience is a *sensus*.) But these feelings are anything but blind. On the contrary they provide our original medium of self-comprehension and orientation: "*it is by them alone that we know the compatibility or incompatibility between us and the things we ought to seek or flee*." (To use the language of Chryssipus: it is by sentiment that we recognize *ta oikeia* in relation to our own *sustasis*.) This original harmonizing of our nature, our sentiment, and our surroundings is an original and innate endowment: "*Whatever the cause of our being, it has provided for our preservation by giving us sentiments suitable to our nature, and it cannot be denied that these, at least, are innate*." (This, according to the Stoics, is the original innate endowment of *Oikeiosis* toward our own constitution.) Given the proper opportunities for maturation, these 'suitable sentiments' systematically extend to encompass the whole of the human race: "[*I*]*f, as cannot be doubted, man is by his nature sociable, or at least made to become so, he can be so only by means of other innate sentiments relative to his species*." (This was the thesis that provided the basis for Stoic Cosmopolitanism.) It is on the basis of these Stoic doctrines – the core components of the Stoic theory of *Oikeiosis* – that the Vicar claims title to his genealogical result: "*It is from the moral system formed by this double relation to oneself and to one's fellows that the impulse of conscience is born*."[61]

As an account of conscience or as an answer to the skeptical critics, the Vicar's genealogy is unlikely to satisfy us. Indeed, after Nietzsche and Freud it is likely to strike us as every bit as naïve as the Vicar's metaphysical arguments seem after Hume, Kant and Darwin. But however we assess the Creed's theological and psychological doctrines, we should not overlook its significance for our history of self-consciousness. For Rousseau has here effectively appropriated the Stoic conception of *Oikeiosis* and redeployed it as a theory of conscience. Self-consciousness, on this view, is to be understood as conscience, and conscience as a form of self-consciousness. Abstracting for the specifically ethical idiom of the Creed, we can put the point this way: the fundamental and original form of self-consciousness for human beings is an affective orientation in action. We are guided in our endeavors by unarticulated

[61] *Émile*, 290; emphasis added throughout.

motives which reflect our implicit understanding of what benefits and befits us, given the kind of thing that we are. This sentimental self-understanding conditions and structures our experience of the sphere of our endeavors, establishing the basic set of discriminations and categories in virtue of which our environment makes itself known to us. Conscience, on Rousseau's view, is thus not simply an awareness of what is right and good (although it is that); it is my incipient form of self-awareness, an implicit understanding of my own nature and what is appropriate for it.

§7 Concluding Observations

I conclude these investigations with some remarks in a somewhat different key. The main work of this paper has been historical, specifically as regards the history and legacy of Stoic ethics and psychology. I have tried to use that history to bring into view a construal of self-consciousness that has since been largely lost from view – a view of self-consciousness as an affective normative orientation in the world, reflecting an implicit self-comprehension. Ultimately, however, my aim is not simply to locate this self-consciousness in the historical record, but to find it as a structure of human experience, and moreover to detach it from the specific metaphysical and ethical contexts in which it was first identified. This is properly a task for another paper, but to take a few steps in that direction I conclude here with some phenomenological observations.

The place to make a start on this, I propose, is found already in the Greek word with which we began. The root of *Oikeiosis* is *Oikos*, home, and the phenomenological structure that concerns me here – the link between conscience and consciousness – comes into view by reflecting on the phenomenology of being-at-home. What is it like to be at home? What is its phenomenological structure? It should be clear, first of all, that as a structure of experience, being-at-home is *not* to be understood in terms of residing somewhere, living out one's biological life in a particular dwelling or structure. One can reside in a particular place without being or feeling at home there, as is typically the case when one first arrives somewhere new. But just as importantly, our being-at-home extends beyond the limits of a particular house or apartment or hut or tent; it extends to our neighborhood, to our village, to our neck-of-the-woods, and in another dimension to those with whom we share that space, a common language and a common cultural orientation. So it should be clear that being-at-home cannot be cashed out as a narrowly architectural designation.

Being-at-home is sometimes eulogized in terms of a certain range of feelings: 'Home is where I feel most comfortable;' 'Home is where the heart is' -- the latter meaning, presumably, that it is that place where my loved ones are to be found. There may be some truth in these clichés, but we must exercise care with them. I have myself rarely felt more comfortable than on my one visit to a luxury desert spa, but I did not feel at all at home among all those idle rich people, dressed in nothing but towels. And I very much

doubt that I would have felt more at home had I been accompanied by my beloved-but-garrulous son or by my mother. So the feeling of comfort to be found at home must be distinguished from those comforts that were on offer at the spa.

So what is involved in being-at-home? We begin to get at an answer by thinking in epistemic terms: being-at-home involves a distinctive kind of knowledge. When I am at home I do not have to figure out how to do what needs to be done; I already know how to do it. Entering a darkened room I do not look for the light switch, my arm already knows just where it is. When I am at home I do not think about which side of an automobile to get into; I just get in and go because I already know. But in specifying this distinctive knowledge it is not enough to say *what* is known in being-at-home, we must also say something about *how* it is known. Part of this can be captured in terms of the notion of familiarity: at home I am familiar with things and what is familiar can be known without need for conscious attention. In this way I know things at home without having to figure them out. But to get at the distinctive medium of this familiarity, it is helpful to reflect on the process of *acquiring* familiarity with a new geographical space. Arriving in a new place I first find my way around by relying on knowledge that is saturated with proper names and concepts. (To get from Fiona's house to the bus station, go down Crouch Street, cross Head Street at the traffic lights, and then go all the way along to the end of Sir Isaac's Walk; to get into the Philosophy Department enter at the NW corner of Square 4; I know this is David's office because it's the one that has his name on the door.) But as I come to be at home in a new space these proper names of landmarks come to drop out of my knowledge. Asked to give directions I realize that I no longer know the name of the road I take; I simply know the way. What we find here, I think, is an indicator of the largely non-conceptual medium of the familiarity we enjoy at home. (Eventually, of course, even the act of giving directions becomes familiar, and I rattle off the street names unthinkingly.)

It is in characterizing this medium of our knowledge at home that the appeal to feeling finds its proper place. Indeed being-at-home and feeling-at-home are probably best understood as two names for one and the same phenomenon. After enough journeys on the same bus route I no longer look up from my laptop to know that it is nearly my stop; I somehow feel or sense the stop approaching. Even after a particularly hard day, dozing in state of weary semi-consciousness, this uncanny sense for the appropriate somehow makes itself felt. But there is a danger here of saying too much. For it is not obvious that I even *feel* anything in such circumstances, if this means that there is some salient qualitative conscious state associated with approaching my stop; I simply put away my laptop and get off. Salient feelings enter the scenario only in those exceptional circumstances when, attention engrossed in what I am doing, I briefly panic in the realization that I am about too miss my stop.

To conclude: being-at-home consists, at least in part, in having a distinctive form of knowledge. It is a practical knowledge, providing orientation in a space; it is a knowledge inscribed in bodily skill and in finely discriminating awareness rather than in proper names, concepts, propositions or theories; it reflects an understanding of my environment and the things in it, and it is normative: knowledge of the

right way to go, of the *appropriate* thing to do. In making myself at home in this sense I *appropriate* things, not in the sense of buying them, but in gaining a familiarity with why is appropriate and inappropriate for them. To lack this familiarity is to find them alien, not part of the domain in which I find myself at home. This is little more than a sketch of one element of a rich and complex phenomenon, but it is enough, I hope, to bring better into focus the link between conscience and consciousness that has been my concern here. For while we typically think of conscience only in a narrow range of specifically moral cases, we should recognize its fundamental commonality with the phenomenological structure just described. Particularly as theorized by Rousseau, conscience is a medium of feeling or sentiment. It informs us of the proper way of proceeding; it provides us with normative orientation by distinguishing what is appropriate from what is inappropriate. With the help of the Stoics we should also recognize that this form of conscience in being-at-home is itself a form of self-consciousness. For this work of conscience is born of an unarticulated, pre-theoretical comprehension, first of ourselves and then of the progressively broader world in which we find ourselves at home.