

# THE SEARCH FOR PERSONAL IDENTITY IN STOIC THOUGHT<sup>1</sup>

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THE doctrine with which I shall be concerned is the Stoic doctrine of *oikeiosis*. Certain aspects of this doctrine have received considerable attention from scholars, while others, perhaps, have been rather less studied than their importance might seem to call for. The origins and affinities of the doctrine have certainly been much discussed. It has long been recognized that the term *oikeiotes* played an important part in the thinking of Theophrastus and some have supposed that the doctrine of *oikeiosis* in Stoic thought was derived in all its essential features from the school of Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> But the term *oikeiosis* itself hardly figures in texts relating to Theophrastus,<sup>3</sup> and it has been argued vigorously by M. Pohlenz and C. O. Brink that the doctrine of *oikeiotes* in Theophrastus was essentially a doctrine of biological affinity with a narrower range than the Stoic doctrine of *oikeiosis*.<sup>4</sup> If this is so, and the evidence very much supports it, then it follows that there is no reason to doubt that the doctrine of *oikeiosis* was Stoic in origin, and that it originated within the framework of Stoic ethical doctrine. This does not of course mean that it had no relation to earlier ideas, but in its fundamentals it did represent something that was new in Greek thought.

Nonetheless its importance has often been underestimated,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The substance of a lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 9th of February, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> So H. von Arnim, "Arius Didymus' Abriss der peripatetischen Ethik", *SB Wien*, 204. 3 (1926), 144-6; F. Dirlmeier, "Die Oikeiosis-Lehre Theophrasts", *Philologus*, Suppl. 30. 1 (1937); O. Regenbogen in *Pauly-Wissowa*, Suppl. vii (1940), 1494 f.

<sup>3</sup> It occurs in Theophrastus fr. 190 Wimmer, where it may or may not repeat the actual language of the original.

<sup>4</sup> M. Pohlenz, "Grundfragen der stoischen Philosophie", *Abh. Göttingen Ges.*, 1940, pp. 1-80; C. O. Brink, "Theophrastus and Zeno on Nature in Moral Theory", *Phronesis*, i (1956), pp. 123-5.

<sup>5</sup> So Brink, in his admirable article on the originality of the doctrine referred to above, is inclined to allow only a limited role to *oikeiosis* in Zeno, and perhaps

and until recently there has been no serious discussion of the *nature* of the doctrine available in English. This has now been remedied to a marked extent by the most valuable chapter on *Oikeiosis* by S. G. Pembroke in A. A. Long, *Problems in Stoicism* (London, 1971), which makes available a great deal of information and which provides a convenient starting point for further discussion. But I believe there is much more that needs to be said, in particular about two things, the exact nature of the doctrine, and the way in which it is to be related to the fundamental principles of Stoic ethical thought.

One of the difficulties in understanding the doctrine has always been the difficulty or uncertainty about how to translate the term into English, or for that matter into any other language, ancient or modern. It has even been unkindly suggested that this difficulty must reflect some radical defect in the original concept,<sup>1</sup> as if anything for which we do not have a word were hardly entitled to exist at all. It might be truer to say that we are in process of arriving independently at very much the same way of looking at things, without yet having found a term that is adequate to express what we have in mind. The modern expression which perhaps comes nearest to it is the process by which we search for and achieve a sense of personal identity. But, whereas we often tend to think of the establishment of our identity as a process of marking off ourselves from our environment, the Stoic process, as we shall see, tended rather to regard the assimilation or relating of one's environment to one's self as

even in Chrysippus, as he holds that "the really fundamental principles of Stoicism may be stated without recourse to *oikeiosis*" (op. cit. p. 141 and following). The term figures only rather incidentally in J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), although on p. 70 he recognizes the fundamental importance of the doctrine, and, I think, not at all in Josiah Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus* (Leiden, 1970). On the other hand, Pembroke can say (and I would agree) "if there had been no *oikeiosis* there would have been no Stoa" (pp. 114-15). The importance of the doctrine was recognized by F. Ravaisson, *Essai sur la métaphysique d'Aristote* (Paris, 1846), ii. 179 ff., and above all in the work of M. Pohlenz, see p. 174, n. 4 above.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the references to earlier views at the opening of Pembroke's chapter in Long, *Problems in Stoicism* (1971), p. 114. L. Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism* (1966), p. 35, speaks of "this truly untranslatable word".

an extension or continuation of the primary process of the construction of the self.

Our sources of information about *oikeiosis* may be grouped under four headings: (1) the earlier history of the word (and the verb *oikeiōō* from which it is derived) in the Greek language; (2) the evidence for the use of the term by the earliest Stoic writers; (3) the accounts of the doctrine found in Cicero and later writers, including the ways in which the term is rendered in Latin; (4) in a quite special position, the summary of Stoic ethics by Hierocles the Stoic in the second century A.D. recovered in papyrus fragments and published for the first time by von Arnim in 1906, unfortunately just after he had completed his publication of the basic texts for the early Stoics in the first three volumes of his *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (SVF)*, 1903-5.<sup>1</sup>

*Oikeiosis* in Stoic doctrine has two faces, an inward looking one and an outward looking one. In each case it is something that happens or is done, a kind of process or activity, leading to something at the conclusion of the process which is different from what obtained at the commencement of the process. The inward looking face is concerned with something that happens or is done in relation to the self or personality, the outward looking face is concerned with a change in the relationship of the self or personality in relation to the outside world. As a working hypothesis it is reasonable to suppose that the process is essentially the same in both cases and this hypothesis seems to fit best with all the evidence. The problem about the nature of *oikeiosis* is to decide exactly what is the nature of the process in each case.

Three distinguishable meanings have been suggested for *oikeiosis* and the verb *oikeiōō* from which it is derived. While

<sup>1</sup> *Hierokles, Ethische Elementarlehre* (P. Berlin 9780), ed. H. von Arnim, *Berliner Klassikertexte*, Heft iv (Berlin, 1906). A fourth volume of the *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* containing indices was published in 1924, vols. i-iii having appeared in 1903-5. Hierocles just secures a mention in *SVF.*, i. p. xl, n. 2, which appeared in 1905. Before the recovery of the Papyrus Hierocles was known from a series of summaries or extracts preserved by Stobaeus. He was universally identified with the Neo-Platonic Hierocles of Alexandria, author of the Commentary on the Carmen Aureum, until K. Praechter, *Hierokles der Stoiker* (Leipzig, 1901), established his identity with the second-century A.D. Stoic Hierocles mentioned by Gellius, IX. 5.8 as a *vir sanctus et gravis*.

they are not mutually exclusive, there has been a tendency for each of the three meanings to be selected by different students as the dominant meaning of the term. These meanings may be described as follows: (1) to appropriate, acquire, make one's own (of things), to win over, bring over to one's side, bring into one's household or family (of people)<sup>1</sup>; (2) to endear or make friendly, to feel endearment for<sup>2</sup>; (3) to admit, accept or claim as belonging to, to claim or assert kinship with.<sup>3</sup>

The term *oikeion* is a relatively common Greek word, and the verb *oikeioo* occurs quite a number of times in fifth- and fourth-century writers. First the adjective *oikeios*. This is applied freely both to persons and things. Its primary meaning is "of the same household or family" and so "that which belongs to (or is a member of) the household or *oikia* in question". In view of this it might seem natural to expect that when something is acquired by a household or when a free person is adopted or a slave is purchased they would all be described as having been made to be *oikeia*, made to belong to the house.<sup>4</sup> In fact it is hard to find a single clear case of such an application of *oikeion* and the reason for this is apparent on reflection. The normal way to become a member of an *oikia* is to be born and brought up in the family, not to be brought in from outside. Hence the frequent conjunction of *oikeion* with *ξυγγενές* and similar terms (cf. Plato, *Rep.*, 470b6, 485c7, Hippias in Plato, *Prot.*, 337c8. In his Myth Protagoras is made to use it with *αὐτοφυής* in Plato, *Prot.*, 321a7). In the important opposition between

<sup>1</sup> "Zueignung"—Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, i. 113, "Zueignung zum eigenen Ich", *Stoa und Stoiker*, p. 39. Cf. Brink, *op. cit.* p. 123 "the way in which goodness becomes natural, that is, *oikeion*, akin to the individual". According to Pembroke, "to appropriate" was the Pre-Stoic meaning which was somewhat modified by the Stoics" (p. 115).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. Edelstein, *The meaning of Stoicism* (1966), pp. 35-36, Long, *Problems in Stoicism*, p. 6 and Pembroke, *ibid.* pp. 115-16, who prefers "well-disposed" to "endearment". So for Cicero's translation "sibi conciliari" the new Oxford Latin Dictionary gives "to take a liking to, become attached to".

<sup>3</sup> So "perception of what is akin", Plutarch *De Stoic. Rep.*, 1038b = *SVF.*, ii. 724. "Zugehörigkeitsverhältnis zu sich selbst"—Praechter, *Hermes*, 51 (1916), p. 518.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. L. S. s.v. *οἰκειόω*, Ast, *Lexicon Platonicum*, s.v. *οἰκειῶ* (passive) *familiaris fio*, and (middle) *se insinuat in familiaritatem alicuius*.

*οἰκεῖον ἀγαθόν* and *ἀλλότριον ἀγαθόν* developed by Thrasy-machus in the first book of the *Republic* *οἰκεῖον ἀγαθόν* is not any good which is acquired, it is the good which belongs most intimately to oneself because it is rooted in one's very nature, and so is opposed to the good which is not so rooted. Of course, objects could be bought and so could slaves. In each case they would in a sense become part of the household. But we may conjecture that even after acquisition there would be a period when they were not accepted as "belonging", in the sense in which original members of the household were felt to belong.

But what of the verb *οἰκεῖο* from which the noun *οἰκειοσις* itself is derived? The verb occurs first in Herodotus and both verb and noun are found in Thucydides. In Herodotus the verb seems to mean "claim as one's own", i.e. claim as belonging to oneself. The noun *οἰκειότης* regularly means "kinship".<sup>1</sup> When Theras escaped from Sparta with some of the Minyai and settled in the island of Thera (*Hdt.* iv. 148) we are told that he did not drive out the existing inhabitants of the island but treated them very much as his kinsmen—*κάρτα οἰκηιεύμενος*. This was on the basis, as Herodotus tells us, of their descent from his own ancestor, Cadmus. On three other occasions the verb is used by Herodotus to refer to claims made by various people. At the opening of his History (i. 4.4) we are told that the Persians claim Asia and the barbarian nations dwelling there as belonging to them while they consider Europe and the Hellenic race as separate from themselves. Here there is no question of a claim based upon acquisition, rather the Persians were asserting a kind of inbuilt or natural relationship. Later in the same book we are told that the Lydians did not claim as their own the discovery of the game of draughts, although they did assert that they had invented all other games (i. 94.4). In other words these other games were not *acquired* by them, but were theirs by right of invention or discovery. Finally we are told in Book iii. 4.1 that the Egyptians claimed Cambyses as "one of their own"—*οἰκηιεύνται*—on the ground that he was born of a daughter of Apis. In every case, the assertion of belonging is the assertion

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Hdt.* vi. 54, *Thuc.*, iii. 86.

of a kind of belonging not based on acquisition but on birth or origin.

In Thucydides the position is not significantly different—there is, however, one case which at first sight is a straight case of appropriation. When Brasidas' men in Macedonia seized baggage abandoned by the supporters of Perdiccas, they proceeded to claim them as their own (iv. 128.4—οἰκείωσιν ἐποιοῦντο), although they were both fighting on the same side against the forces of Arrhabaeus. As a result Perdiccas was far from pleased. But when soldiers appropriate the property of fellow soldiers, more often than not they do not announce that they are taking what belongs to someone else, but prefer to declare that what they have taken has always belonged to themselves. It is possible that the somewhat unusual phrase—it is not paralleled elsewhere<sup>1</sup>—οἰκείωσιν ἐποιοῦντο—means that they declared that the property in question was in fact theirs, and that it was just this that helped to upset Perdiccas. On any count, the passage is of great interest as it contains the sole occurrence of the noun οἰκείωσις before it is found in Stoic contexts.

The verb itself occurs twice in Thucydides, both times in speeches. When the Plataeans are pleading their case before Spartan judges after the capture of Plataea in 427 B.C. the Thebans declare that they had entered the city invited by leading Plataean citizens, in the process bringing them into a natural relationship with their Boeotian kinsmen—ἐς τὴν ξυγγένειαν οἰκειοῦντες (iv. 65.3). Here the implication is that of re-establishing a natural community rather than bringing in an outsider, who when brought in would still lack ξυγγένεια, no matter how warmly he was welcomed. In the other case (i. 36.1), however, the evidence is possibly against the general thesis that I wish to maintain, since it is a question of the Athenians getting the Corcyreans on their side in the coming war when it will be important if the place is οἰκειοῦται rather than πολεμοῦται. Here πολεμοῦται can only mean “is made an enemy base”, “is made or becomes hostile” (cf. Thuc., v. 98)

<sup>1</sup> But for the type of expression, cf. A. A. Long, *Language and Thought in Sophocles* (London, 1968), p. 82.

and it follows that *οἰκειοῦται* will be opposite in meaning, namely “ becomes a base that is on our side ”, “ belongs to us ”, “ is friendly rather than hostile ”. Here it should be noticed that the reference is not to the Corcyreans, but to the place, τὸ χωρίον, and so to the facilities of Corcyra as a base, as a physical entity, rather than to the feelings of the people who control it. Nonetheless both the verbs, *οἰκειοῦται* and *πολεμοῦται*, refer to bringing something about which was previously not the case, rather than to simple recognition of something which was already the case.

The noun *οἰκειosis* is not found in Plato, but the verb occurs eight times,<sup>1</sup> and we also have a newly coined adjective *οἰκειῶτικος* which occurs once. In every case the meaning is clearly “ make to belong to or make something a part of something else ”. In *Protagoras*, 326b2 (in the Logos ascribed to Protagoras himself) it is a matter of making the souls of boys accept specific rhythms and harmonies in order to make them more civilized. Here the suggestion seems to be that the rhythms should become rhythms in the souls themselves. In *Parmenides*, 128a5 Zeno is said to be anxious to “ be at one ” with Parmenides not merely as his friend but also in his writing. In *Timaeus*, 45c4 the light from the eye meets the light from an object and is fused into a single body at one with itself—ἐν σῶμα οἰκειωθέν. In *Epistles*, iii. 317e4 Dion is to be restored with recognition of his kinship and relationship, and in *Laws*, v. 738d7 a sense of community is to be created by bringing the people in a city together at sacrifices and the celebration of religious ceremonies. In *Epistles*, vii. 330b2 Dionysius is accused of avoiding the closest form of association possible with Plato, that achieved by philosophic discussion.

In all these cases we are concerned not with mere acquisition or appropriation but with the establishment and recognition of a more intimate and fundamental relationship. This is less marked, although perhaps not entirely absent in the remaining cases. In *Laws*, viii. 843e1 we are told of the way in which

<sup>1</sup> See Ast, *Lexicon Platonicum*, s.v. That the list is complete is confirmed by the unpublished Platonic word list compiled by Dr. L. Brandwood in the School of Classical Studies in the University of Manchester.

another man's bees may be induced to settle on our own property. This is stealing but the result is that the swarm settles permanently. In *Sophist*, 232b2 the First Definition of Sophistry includes the attribute *oikeiōtike*, and the reference is to the acquiring of young men by the sophist in a way comparable with the acquisition of animals whether wild or tame. But there is probably included the sense of making the young men feel that they belong with the sophist. Finally, in *Republic*, 462c1 the guardians are warned against abusing their power by treating all things in the city as their own property. Even here the meaning seems to be not so much "forcibly seizing" as "using as if it were their own" in virtue of their power to do so.

In Aristotle the verb occurs once, in an interesting passage in *Politics*, vii. 1336b30, where Theodorus the actor is said always to have demanded the right of first entrance in a play on the ground that spectators "become at one"—*oikeiomenōn*—with what they hear first. The noun *oikeiosis* does not occur, but there are five occurrences of *συνοικειοῦσθαι* in two books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* where in every case we are concerned with affinities between actual blood-relations, or between entities where the metaphor of a natural biological relationship is quite strongly felt.<sup>1</sup>

I turn now to the specific evidence for the doctrine of *oikeiosis* in the early Stoa. It will be convenient to concentrate attention first on the "inward looking" aspect of *oikeiosis* and to discuss this right down through the ancient traditions before turning to the outward facing aspect of the doctrine. The most specific statements that we have place *oikeiosis* right at the beginning of each individual's development, namely as something which commences as soon as a living creature is born. The

<sup>1</sup> *E.N.*, 1161b21, 1162a2, 1172a20, 1175a29, 1178a15. The noun *συνοικειοσις* occurs once in *Rhet. ad Alex.*, 1425b38. Other fourth century uses of interest are *Ps. Dem.*, LXI. 4, Aeneas Tacticus, XXIV. 5, Sotades Comicus fr. 1.17. In the Stoic period the term is found in Epicurean writers also, cf. Epicurus, *Ep. ad Her.*, 37, *Ep. ad Men.*, 124, and *Sent. Vat.*, 41 (*oikeiomata*). Cicero, *De Finibus*, V.65, suggests that at least the outward-facing aspect of *oikeiosis* was accepted also by the New Academy, cf. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, ii. 65-66. That the doctrine was *πολυθρύλητος* is stated in the Anonymous *Commentary on the Theaetetus*, col. 7. 20-22.



fundamental text preserved in Diogenes Laertius (vii. 85 = *SVF.*, iii. 178) tells us the following:

They say that the first impulse which an animal has is to preserve itself, because Nature makes it belong from the outset, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his work *On Ends*, declaring that its own constitution and its consciousness of this constitution is the first thing that belongs (*proton oikeion*). For it would not have been reasonable for Nature to assign the animal itself to another, nor when she had made it, that she should neither assign it to another nor not make it belong. Accordingly it remains to say that when she had constituted the animal she made it belong in relation to itself. For it is in this way that things harmful are thrust away and things that belong (*oikeia*) are permitted to approach.

In the above translation, which keeps rather more closely to the Greek than those usually offered, the verb *oikeioo* is translated "make to belong". The text is often emended<sup>1</sup> to give the meaning "belong to itself" and this is virtually what is in fact said in the last sentence but one. But this is the conclusion of the passage, not its beginning, and the rendering "made it belong *in relation to* itself" is probably more accurate than the more traditional "made it belong *to* itself". There are not two entities involved, the animal and the self to which it belongs, but only one, the animal which, through its consciousness of itself, is itself. It is in this sense that it "belongs". So, while the text at the opening of the passage has been frequently emended, it is perhaps safest to keep it without emendation and to interpret it as I have suggested.

Further light is shed on the doctrine when we look at Cicero's account in *De Finibus*, Book iii. 76 ff. = *SVF.*, iii. 182. While this is most probably based on some later Stoic compendium, there is reason to suppose that the material flows from the same ultimate source as the passage in Diogenes Laertius, and this is likely to be the work of Chrysippus cited by Diogenes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The translation given is based on an unemended text, with the exception of *ποιήσασαν* for *ποιήσαι ἄν* as in line 10 of the Oxford text, ed. H. S. Long, vol. ii (corrected impression, 1966). For the retention of *οὐκ* before *οἰκειῶσαι* see M. Gigante, *Diogene Laerzio, Vite dei Filosofi* (Bari, 1962), p. 329, n. 86, and G. Watson, *The Stoic Theory of Knowledge* (Belfast, 1966), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, iii. 1<sup>5</sup>. 212, n. 2, von Arnim, *SVF.*, i. p. xxix. For Cicero's immediate source see references cited by Pembroke, in Long, p. 143, n. 31.

As soon as an animal has been born it is "conciliated" to itself (*ipsum sibi conciliari*) and is commended to preserve itself and to love its own constitution and the things which tend to preserve that constitution, while it is alienated from destruction and things which seem to bring about destruction. That this is the case they prove by the fact that children seek wholesome things and reject their opposites before pleasure or pain has touched them. This would not happen unless they loved their own constitution and feared destruction. And it would be impossible for them to seek anything unless they had perception of themselves and for this reason loved themselves.

A comparison of this passage with that from Diogenes Laertius enables us to suggest some tentative answers. These will be confirmed by later evidence. *Oikeiosis* is a process by which an organism "comes to terms with itself". It is not a question at this stage of adding to, or extending the self, by the acquisition of things that were not originally present. Rather it is a question of recognition. It is by the exercise of the power to perceive themselves as objects that they "come to terms" with themselves. The process of *oikeiosis* is a process of self-recognition, and it is by self-recognition that a sense of personal identity is achieved. Initially, we are told by Seneca, this recognition when achieved by an infant, is not an understanding of *what* his constitution is, he simply is aware of his constitution. The same will be the case with an animal—in both cases the perception of the creature's constitution is crude, summary and obscure (*Ep.*, 121.11-12). Nonetheless, this perception of itself and its constitution is found in all animals, and not merely in some (*Ep.*, 121.5 = *SVF.*, iii. 184).

It is fairly certain that Seneca is drawing directly on some later Stoic treatment of these themes, and the same is probably true of Cicero. Consequently it is possible to question the value of their evidence for the earlier Stoa. But this is hardly the case with the document which is Hierocles' Summary of Stoic Ethics (*Ethike Stoiceiosis*), recovered from papyrus and published in 1906. Its account is "undoubtedly scrupulous in its orthodoxy".<sup>1</sup> This unique document sheds a flood of light upon the

<sup>1</sup> Pembroke, *op. cit.* p. 118. The evidence for this statement is in von Arnim's Introduction, pp. xv-xxxvi, cf. also Praechter, *Philosophie des Altertums* i<sup>14</sup> (1957), p. 499. According to M. Giusta, *I Dossografi di Etica* (Turin), i (1964), pp. 170-4, 317-24, the source may be Eudorus, but this is part of his overall

whole doctrine of *oikeiosis* and it is time that its contents were better known. It amply confirms the indications of the two passages cited earlier. The first chapter is entitled "Whether an animal perceives itself?" An animal's self-perception begins immediately at birth and this self-perception provides the principle of the first *oikeion* which in turn is the best starting point for a summary of Stoic ethics. It is not true to say that the outside world is perceived first—animals first perceive their own physical parts and the functions of these parts, although later on we are told that this perception is initially unclear and confused. It is, however, continuous and unbroken, not intermittent (col. 4.44).

Column 6 of the Hierocles Papyrus contains a further section or chapter heading, which reads "Whether an animal enjoys perceiving itself and is made *oikeion* to itself (*oikeioutai heautoi*)". We are told once again that perception of oneself begins immediately at birth (col. 6.23-24, 7.48). It apparently has at least two aspects. Perceptions of external qualities of things, such as white, sweet, hot, are possible because when we perceive them we have *internal* experiences of them. When we perceive heat *we* are warmed, when we taste something sweet, *we* are sweetened and so on. It follows that our initial experience of the external world is in fact a direct experience of our own states of consciousness, and so of our own selves (col. 6.3-10). Indeed without perception of themselves it is not possible for creatures to have apprehension (*antilepsis*) of things external (col. 6.1-3).

This is illustrated by a fascinating example, or rather application, of the doctrine (col. 7.5-15). Children become upset when shut up in darkened houses and deprived of all sounds. They think they are experiencing a destruction of themselves, and accordingly are very distressed. It is suggested that as a precaution against this fear nurses should encourage children in the practice of voluntarily closing their eyes in order to experience the shutting out of visual experiences. Earlier (in col. 4.44-52),

thesis according to which all of the statements with which we are concerned, including those of Cicero and Diogenes Laertius, go back to a single lost *Vetusta Placita Ethica*.

we had been given an account of the way the body is perceived. The soul is mixed with all parts of the body and so it both strikes the parts of the body and is struck by them, it presses against them and is pressed by them. Messages return to the ruling element of the soul, to the *hegemonikon*, and the result is apprehension (*antilepsis*) of all the parts of the body and also of the parts of the soul. This is equated (*ison*) with the perception of itself by the animal.

This explanation of the term apprehension (*antilepsis*) enables us better to understand what is often treated as a definition of *oikeiosis*—the statement made by Plutarch (*De Stoic. rep.*, 1038c = *SVF.*, ii. 724) that *oikeiosis* seems to be a perception and apprehension (*antilepsis*) of what is *oikeion*. The grasping involved in *antilepsis* is not a process of acquiring property in or possession of something that did not previously belong. It is the experiencing, the conscious perception of what was always there and of relationships that were already in existence before they came to be perceived. It is the process of becoming aware of the parts of oneself, and so achieving self-awareness. The conscious self is, if you like, being created, but only by becoming conscious of the nature of the self that is already there waiting to be perceived.

The natural and spontaneous occurrence of this process is illustrated in a number of ways in Stoic sources. Seneca (*Ep.*, 121.8) directs our attention to the way in which a tortoise makes efforts to right itself when turned upside down and placed on its back. He argues that this is not due to any discomfort from the unfamiliar position, but from a desire to resume its natural state. This is because we naturally love and wish to preserve the condition of which we have become aware as constituting ourselves—our “constitution”. Children’s fear of the dark also illustrates our desire to preserve and continue the pattern of experiences which is the pattern of ourselves. Hierocles (col. 1.51-2.3) speaks of the spontaneity with which living creatures discover the appropriate use of our limbs and organs—this is something which we seem able to perceive immediately, and it is a form of perception of the relationship between the various parts of ourselves. Thus we do not attempt to use our hands

for walking, but only our feet. We don't try to listen with our eyes or to catch hold of things with our feet but know immediately which are the appropriate parts of the body to use.

Our attachment to our constitutions leads us also to reject amputation, physical distortion or change of function of parts of the body from what they are designed for. This is discussed at some length by Cicero (*De Finibus*, iii. 17) and was clearly a standard topic of discussion among Stoics. Some parts of the body are for use, others for decoration such as the beard and the nipples on the male chest, the peacock's tail and the plumage of the pigeon with its shifting colours. Each creature loves itself as it is. This created a problem for some Stoics when considering what to do about hair. Musonius Rufus, for example, felt that to shave off the beard would violate the principle of respect for one's own nature. On the other hand excessive growth of hair can be untidy and unclean. A possible solution suggested itself. What nature gives must not be removed. Therefore it is wrong to shave. But it is possible that nature may give rather more than is actually needed. Therefore trimming of the hair may perhaps be accepted after all, provided it is not entirely removed.<sup>1</sup> We smile perhaps, but the problem of hair is still very much with us. Our attachment to our own constitutions is so strong, however, that it survives injuries and pathological conditions of the body when they occur. A person suffering from offensive or foul-smelling diseases, from cancerous growths, may be unlovely to all around him. But he is not unlovely to himself (Hierocles, col. 7.16-27).

It can be seen from these examples that we do, according to the Stoics, feel affection for ourselves and the various parts of ourselves identified by us as such through the process of perception. But this affection should probably not be identified outright with the process of *oikeiosis*—it is rather something that follows *oikeiosis* and is a concomitant of it. For the affection presupposes recognition—we do not feel this kind of affection for things not recognized as part of ourselves. Consequently *oikeiosis* can be taken both as a necessary condition and a sufficient condition for self-love. But it is not itself self-love.

<sup>1</sup> Musonius Rufus, chapter 21 Hense.

But was *oikeiosis* no more than a process of self-recognition? One piece of evidence in what has so far been mentioned seems to suggest that it was more. That is the translation of *oikeiosis* which Cicero gives, namely *ipsum animal sibi conciliari et commendari ad se conservandum* (*De Finibus*, iii. 16). I say no more about *commendari* and self-preservation. But *sibi conciliari* must mean literally "to be conciliated with itself", "to come to terms with itself". But there are not two terms in any real sense. The animal is itself, not something other than itself. Consequently the process of "self-conciliation" suggests two things: first that in the process of perceiving oneself one is involved in a process of construction or creation of a self. Until it is perceived by itself a self does not have any existence. Secondly that the process of construction or creation involves an element of conciliation, of bringing into an orderly pattern, of harmonization of disparate or even discordant elements in the soul through the recognition of the tension, the *tonike kinesis* which for the Stoics is the basis of self-perception as well as the object of self-perception. Some confirmation of this way of looking at things will be suggested when we come later on to consider *oikeiosis* in its outward facing aspect.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of references to *oikeiosis* are to processes which begin as soon as an animal is born, or at least this is the impression given at first sight by the passages in question. Some have supposed as a result that *oikeiosis* is confined in its operation to the first stage or stages in the development of a living creature. But I believe there are indications that this is not correct. Rather the process was regarded by the Stoics as at work at all stages in human development, from the earliest stage of all which follows immediately upon birth, to the final stage in moral development, the achievement of *sophia* (*sapientia*) by the Stoic sage. The indications are as follows:

A large number, although not all, of the references to *oikeiosis* where the context shows that the reference is to the immediately post-natal period describe it as the first *oikeiosis* (*prote oikeiosis*) and that which is the object of the *oikeiosis* is

<sup>1</sup> See Hierocles, col. 4. pp. 31-34 with von Arnim, Intro., pp. xxiv-xxviii.

called the first *oikeion* (*proton oikeion*).<sup>1</sup> While the term *proton* could mean prior logically rather than prior in time,<sup>2</sup> it is certainly used in a temporal sense by Cicero<sup>3</sup> and is most probably so used in the Greek sources as well. A first *oikeiosis* in time implies a second and subsequent *oikeioseis* which will be later in time. How this could apply is seen in a passage in Seneca (*Ep.*, 121.15-16) which tells us that there is not one constitution but a series of constitutions throughout the life of man, one for an infant, another for a boy, another for an old man. All men are “conciliated” to the constitution in which they are—first without teeth, then with teeth. Seneca forbears to add the third constitution—that of toothless old age, but his argument implies it. Whether plant or animal, an organism seeks to preserve the constitution in which it is at the moment. In other words *oikeiosis* continues and is re-activated time and again throughout life.

Such *oikeioseis*, however, are not confined to successive adaptations to our changing bodies. Plutarch (*SVF.*, iii. 146) clearly applies the doctrine to things such as health and beauty, which for the Stoics constitute the sphere of things indifferent (*adiaphora*). Hierocles (col. 9.5-8) and the hostile Anonymous *Commentary on Plato's Theaetetus* (col. 7.40) both refer to an *oikeiosis hairetikē* which is concerned with *hairēta*, in other words to an *oikeiosis* which is concerned with conscious choice among external objects. The place of conscious choice in the Stoic theory of morals is made very plain in the third book of Cicero's *De Finibus* as well as in many other sources. Its essential nature is not in dispute. The first stage in human behaviour, beginning as soon as a human being is born, is dominated by the primary natural impulses—*protai hormai, ta prota kata phusin*. This is succeeded, in time, by a second stage, when conscious choice between alternative courses of action becomes the appropriate thing to do—what Cicero calls *cum officio selectio*. It can only be to this stage that *oikeiosis hairetikē* refers, since the reference to external objects shows that here too we are concerned with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *SVF.*, iii. 178.2 and 4, 183, 188.19, 492, Hierocles, col. 1.2 ff. *πρώτη αἰσθησις*, Hierocles, col. 6. 51-53. <sup>2</sup> See Pembroke, *op. cit.* n. 8, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> See the first two sentences in *De Fin.*, iii. 21 = *SVF.*, iii. 188.

*adiaphora*, and that the distinction between *hairesis* and *ekloge* found elsewhere is not here involved. (Indeed it is likely that for Hierocles *oikeiosis hairesis* was equated with *hairesis eklektike*, cf. col. 9.10, although unfortunately the text is broken at this point and we cannot be sure.)

Next after the stage of such *officia* comes the wisdom of the truly wise man which alone secures truly right action—the *κατόρθωμα* of the Greeks, Cicero's *honestas* and *honeste vivere*. This stage will be what is referred to by Cicero when in the *Prior Academics* (ii. 131 = *SVF.*, i. 181) he says *Honeste autem vivere, quod ducatur a conciliatione naturae, Zeno statuit finem esse bonorum*, where *conciliatio* is Cicero's word for *oikeiosis*. This will be the meaning of Galen when he declares (*SVF.*, iii. 299a35) that according to Chrysippus it is only the noble and good (*pros monon to kalon*) towards which we have *oikeiosis*. When Cicero says (*De Fin.*, iii. 22 = *SVF.*, iii. 497) *non inest in primis naturae conciliationibus honesta actio* the implication of his words is that *honesta actio*, which is the behaviour appropriate to the sage, does occur in *conciliationes* which are subsequent to the first. Indeed the continuation of *oikeiosis* through all the stages of moral development can be seen to follow from basic principles. The ultimate objective for the Stoic is life in accordance with nature—*zēn homologoumenōs tēi phusei*. The initial *oikeiosis* was in relation to the primary natural urges which are the basic stuff from which the self is constituted. But, as I. G. Kidd has shown conclusively in what is perhaps the most important contribution to the understanding of Stoicism in English published in our generation,<sup>1</sup> it is the same nature which is the end for man at each of the three stages of moral development, not merely for the first (Stage I). What is involved is the achievement of life in accordance with nature at a deeper level at each of the stages, until finally life in accordance with nature and life in accordance with reason are identical. But the beginnings of "life in accordance with reason" are already present in the primary natural impulses, which are themselves the expression of the universal active principle in the universe. This

<sup>1</sup> "Stoic Intermediates and the end for man", *C.Q.*, n.s. v (1955), 181-94, reprinted with revisions as chapter VII in A. A. Long, *Problems in Stoicism* (1971).



active principle is Logos and so rational.<sup>1</sup> It is accordingly understandable that the process, which was always one of understanding and awareness of nature, should also be the same, namely *oikeiosis*. It is in this sense that reason, *logos*, is said to supervene as a craftsman—*epiginetai technites*—for the original impulse which goes back to Stage I—not to replace it but to fulfil it at a deeper level (*D.L.*, vii. 86 = *SVF.*, iii. 43). Finally, as we shall see, probably all the outward facing aspects of *oikeiosis* operate primarily and possibly exclusively at stages beyond Stage I. This means that seen from this aspect *oikeiosis* is certainly not likely to have been limited to the first stage of man's moral development.

It is to selected features of this outward facing aspect of *oikeiosis* that I now turn. One of the distressing things in our own experiences at the present day is the way in which the principle of group loyalty, which is appropriate and necessary for the maintenance of any group, so often has as its outward looking face an element of rejection and hostility towards other groups or even to the whole of the outside world. For the Stoics man's relation to the rest of the world was expressible in terms of *oikeiosis* just as was his relation to himself. They, like us, felt it necessary to oppose *oikeiosis* to *allogtriosis*, "acceptance as our own" to "rejection as not belonging to us". But the way outward facing *oikeiosis* works in Stoic theory is different and is of considerable interest and importance.

Perhaps the most convenient starting point for discussion, and certainly the most memorable and striking way of presenting the matter, is to be found in a passage assigned to Hierocles by Stobaeus, iv. 671-3 Hense, a passage not found in the Papyrus as we have it.<sup>2</sup> According to this passage man is to be regarded as standing at the centre of a series of concentric circles. In the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sen. *Ep.*, 121.14 *dicitis, inquit, omne animal primum constitutioni suae conciliari : hominis autem constitutionem rationalem esse : et ideo conciliari hominem sibi non tamquam animali, sed tamquam rationali. ea enim parte sibi carus homo qua homo est.*

<sup>2</sup> It is usually ascribed to the *Philosophoumena* of Hierocles mentioned in the Suda. Von Arnim regarded the *Ethike Stoicheiosis* as an introductory chapter to this work. But against this view see Praechter, *Hermes*, 51 (1916), 519, n. 1 and Ueberweg-Praechter (above p. 186, n. 1), p. 499.

innermost circle is the man himself, his body, and the objects needed to satisfy his physical needs, in the second circle are his parents, brothers, wife and children, in the third his aunts, uncles, grandparents, nephews, nieces and cousins, and in the fourth his other relations. Next, outside the fourth circle, come in order demesmen, fellow-tribesmen, citizens, members of neighbouring towns, fellow-countrymen, and finally the remainder of the human race taken as a whole. Once this succession of circles has been surveyed (i.e. perceived—the verb is *tetheoremenon* 672.2) the circles are to be pulled in towards the centre and those in circles further out are to be transferred, apparently, into circles closer in. One way of doing this, it seems (for the details are far from clear) is by changing the names or forms of address for more distant relatives into the names appropriate for closer relatives.

Now it should be pointed out<sup>1</sup> that the whole procedure presupposes that the person at the centre is already an adult, although the central circle contains the product of the primary or first *oikeiosis* which constituted the individual in the first place. Nonetheless the process involved seems equally clearly that of recognition. The doctrine of widening circles seems to be well known to Cicero and, as it occurs in his *De Officiis*, Book i (par. 54), he presumably found it in Panaetius. But this does not mean that it could not be a doctrine going back to the early Stoa. Elements of the doctrine are certainly mentioned elsewhere. The affection we feel for our parents is traced by Cicero to *oikeiosis*. So also is the affection parents feel for their children (*SVF.*, iii. 179, cf. 724). Hierocles in the Papyrus (col. 9.3-4) speaks of *sungenikē oikeiosis*—*oikeiosis* with relatives—which seems to be the same as his *sterktikē oikeiosis*—*oikeiosis* responsible for affection. The affection of parents for their children implies the adulthood of the parents, who otherwise would have no children of their own. The Anonymous *Commentary on the Theaetetus* has a *kēdomonikē oikeiosis*, which may extend more widely than *sungenikē* (cols. 7.28 and 8.5-6), and it also refers generally (col. 5.36-39) to *oikeiosis* in relation to people near (*pros tous plesion*).

<sup>1</sup> So Pembroke, *op. cit.* p. 126.

This extension beyond the strictest and narrowest limits of the individual was a part of *oikeiosis* right at the start, however. The primary *oikeiosis* includes not only the parts of the body, but the individual's perceptions of the external world—these perceptions are both parts of the world and also parts of himself. It may be added that we are explicitly told that the first *conciliatio* or *oikeiosis* attaches us not only to ourselves but to everything which conforms to the needs of our nature (Cic. *De Fin.*, iii. 21 = *SVF.*, iii. 188). The vital question, however, is not *oikeiosis* at the early stage, but the nature of *oikeiosis* at the level of the greatest generality, namely in relation to the human race as a whole. Here Cicero is explicit (*De Fin.*, iii. 63 = *SVF.*, iii. 340): the principle at work is *communis hominum inter homines naturalis commendatio*. Now *commendare* was used by Cicero as a technical term in his original definition of *oikeiosis* (*De Fin.*, iii. 16 = *SVF.*, iii. 182) and this makes it quite clear that it is *oikeiosis* with which we are concerned even at this most general level. This is correctly summed up by another writer describing Cicero's position: *colligit [Cicero] unum hominem sociale esse animal et cum sibi tum omnibus hominibus natura esse conciliatum* (Commentum Lucani, p. 74 = *SVF.*, iii. 492) even although he traces its origin back to the *prima conciliatio nascendi*. Clearly the process is not confined to the first stage since existing human societies of adults belong to Stage II.

This outward facing *oikeiosis* can be regarded as a further development, a fresh extension of the first *oikeiosis* now reaching into new areas. But I want to suggest that this is not perhaps the best way to look at it. For really it is not something new, it is simply a continuation of the same process with which we have been concerned all the time. The mechanism is perception. By coming to perceive, know and understand wider and wider circles centred upon ourselves, we come not only to feel affection for others, we also make them part of ourselves, part of our own identity. The process of seeking and achieving personal identity is itself the process which brings us into successful relations with other people.<sup>1</sup> This perception is a

<sup>1</sup> For a study of this theme in the Hellenistic period see A. S. Voelke, *Les rapports avec autrui dans la philosophie grecque d'Aristote à Panétius* (Paris, 1961).

perception of a shared nature, namely reason, which is for the Stoic both the rational principle present in the individual soul and also the universal active rational principle which interpenetrates the whole of the universe. In this way one's relations with other people are part of one's relation with oneself. The resulting cosmic city includes not only the whole of humanity<sup>1</sup> but also the gods. It is in this sense that Cicero is able to say (*Tusc. Disp.*, iv. 51) *numquam privatam esse sapientem*.

<sup>1</sup> This is not intended to be a pronouncement on the problem raised by Zeno's *Politeia*, for which see H. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought*, pp. 156 ff. The "resulting cosmic city" is the final product of the process of *oikeiosis* beyond which that process can be carried no further.