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THE STOIC NOTION OF COSMIC SYMPATHY
IN CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Abstract: The later Stoics, especially – and most notably – Posidonius of Apamea, allegedly the greatest polymath of his age and the last in a celebrated line of great philosophers of the ancient world, gradually developed the belief that all parts of the universe, either ensouled or not, were actually interconnected due to the omnipresent, corporeal, primordial kosmikon pyr which, according to Stoicism, pervades each being as the honey pervades the honeycomb. As for reasonable beings, in particular, kosmikon pyr takes the form of logos. Due to that power, Posidonius believes, the phases of moon, for instance, can affect the succession of tides and ebb–tides; on the same grounds, the signs can have major effect on the course of events and, therefore, allow for divination. That kind of interconnectedness, apart from justifying the interdependentness of all beings to each other, testifies for an utter kinship between them, for sympatheia. In this short paper I intent to show that Posidonius’s approach has been promptly adopted and utilized by modern holistic theories concerning Environmental Ethics, especially by Arne Naess’s Deep Ecology and Ecosophy T, in the context of which notions such as kinship, interconnectedness, interdependentness and identification of all beings are key parameters for the articulation of their argumentation. I also intent to outline some essential – in my opinion – differences in the way Posidonius and Naess make use of the notion of interconnectedness, together with some inconsistencies which can be potentially fatal, at least as far as a system of ethics is concerned. This is because notions such as cosmic sympathy may possibly establish an interesting, even charming and influential cosmology or metaphysics, but when it comes to ethics, in my opinion, they can only provide shaky grounds for establishing a firm one, since they allow for deterministic views, which more or less leave no room for personal responsibility, to wit for personal praise or blame.

Keywords: Posidonius, Naess, sympathy, identification, Stoicism, Deep Ecology, Ecosophy T, self-realization, kosmikon pyr, logos, pne, ethics.
It is neither odd nor unlawful for philosophers to look back and receive inspiration from the past, especially if this past is a glorified and influential one. It only gets peculiar when thinkers of our time resort to past theories that at first glance seem barren, inhospitable for—and incompatible with—their objectives. This could not be more manifest than with regard to contemporary Environmental Ethics, especially when more than often avowed bio-centricists and eco-centricists articulate their moral approaches based on notions derived from clearly anthropocentric or egocentric moral systems, such as the Stoics’ one. In this short essay I intend to exhibit the close affinities there exist between the most influential moral system of our times regarding environmental philosophy, namely Arne Naess’s Ecosophy T, and the Stoic cosmology and metaphysics. In my opinion, the grounds for this intrinsic relation is the way both systems understand and make use of the notion of universal—or cosmic—sympathy, by means of which they both bolster up a fascinating and inspiring cosmology. When they have to move from cosmology to ethics, however, their ways become not only separate, but also diverging; that diverging in fact, that one might be justified in wondering whether there once actually was a common starting gate or not. I will also argue that resorting to the notion of cosmic sympathy is no safe ground for a consistent and functional Environmental Ethics, for, in my opinion, it is no safe ground for any kind of ethics in general, and that it therefore should be abandoned.

Stoicism and Ecosophy T share an almost identical historical background, in the sense that both systems were delivered in times of rapid and drastic change, with the spectrum of the all-encompassing globalization hastily approaching. Another common feature of theirs is that they were both triggered as a reaction to the dominant philosophical doctrines of their era: Stoicism was initially launched as a stern rejection of the Platon-ic theory of forms, while Ecosophy T and its twin, Deep Ecology, was

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meant to be a negation of the anthropocentric ethics which had for ages been dominating Western philosophy. Both systems also share a quite similar structure: they are more or less eclectic, comprehensive and, in some degree, open systems, while their ethics is grossly based upon – if not deduced from – their ontology. From all other aspects, though, Stoicism and Ecosophy T are essentially different. While, for instance, Stoicism seems to be satisfied with the achievement of a self-content inner tranquility based on the attainment of virtue, Ecosophy T promises a radical change in the way we understand our world, and interact with our environment. If Stoicism is revolutionary in any way, this revolution is an inward one. For Ecosophy T and Deep Ecology, on the contrary, transforming oneself is only the first step towards altering our overall interaction with the environment, to wit toward changing the world.

Both theories perceive each being not as an isolated entity, but mainly as a part of a broader system, as large as the entire world. From the Stoic point of view each being is associated with the rest of the world in the way the limbs and parts of the body are associated with the whole body: they belong to it, and everything the body suffers has effect on the part, and vice versa. Hence, private interests can only coincide with the common one; bonum singulorum overlaps with bonum omnium. In the context of Stoic ontology all things are interconnected due to the existence of some kind of primordial fire, one that the Stoics refer to as technikon pyr, a mixture of fire and air actually, that permeates the entire world as its soul, sustaining everything. The soul pervades all beings like the honeycomb, in the words of Tertullian, not in the form of an intangible soul, but as a solid, material substance. The whole world has been actually created by – and from – it, in order to be inhabited by it

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9 Dragona-Monachou, op. cit., 34.
11 Ierodiakonou, op. cit., 101.
right after. When partaking to a sentient, rational being, to wit a human one, this substance takes the form of logos. Due to the omnipresent pyr – or pneuma\(^{14}\) – all beings are inextricably linked to each other,\(^{15}\) while rational ones share a much closer relationship,\(^{16}\) due to which they are able to feel an inner kinship (oikeiosis) to each other,\(^{17}\) as well as to develop mutual collaboration, synergian in the words of Marcus Aurelius.\(^{18}\)

Though it is was by no means strange to the early Stoics and especially to Chrysippos,\(^{19}\) nor is it alien to the overall attitude of Stoicism in general,\(^{20}\) the notion of cosmic sympathy is being usually credited to Posidonius, the pupil of Panaetius, an once ignored philosopher of the early 1\(^{st}\) century BCE, who now is considered to be the last great Greek philosopher\(^{21}\) before the beginning of that epoch during which Greek and Oriental thought were united.\(^{22}\) Having more or less departed from Heraclitus’s sway and – under the influence of his teacher – moved closer to Plato and Aristotle,\(^{23}\) Posidonius gave fresh emphasis to the belief that the whole of reality is knit together by natural sympathy between all its parts.\(^{24}\) Initially he developed an interest for the effect of the moon on tides, which led him to Cadiz to investigate the phenomenon.\(^{25}\) Seeing the effect of the sun and the moon on the sequence of tides and ebb-tides, Posidonius considered affinities among things of the earth, due to which he supposed the existence of sympathetic relations between all parts of the world, a mutual affecting among them.\(^{26}\) Hence he moved on to distin-

\(^{14}\) Cicero, op. cit., II.19, 54.

\(^{15}\) Marcus Aurelius refers to a “common nature,” to a “ton olon physis.” For an excellent account see Dragona-Monachou, op. cit., 32ff.

\(^{16}\) Marcus Aurelius, op. cit., 7.5; 7.22; 8.26; in 7.13 he explicitly stresses rationality as a property by means of which beings that are endowed with it, although still a part of the all-encompassing system of nature or physis, are also members of a narrower subsystem, namely that of rational beings.

\(^{17}\) Dragona-Monachou, op. cit., 37.

\(^{18}\) Marcus Aurelius, op. cit., 7.13.

\(^{19}\) P. A. Meijer, Stoic Theology: Proofs for the Existence of the Cosmic God and of the Traditional Gods (Delft: Eburon, 2007), 86.


\(^{22}\) K. Reinhardt, Poseidonios (München: Oskar Beck, 1921), 3-18 [as cited in Edelstein, op. cit., 287].

\(^{23}\) Edelstein, op. cit., 286.


\(^{25}\) Ferguson, op. cit., 362.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.
guish between two kinds of this omnipresent sympathy: one that exists between all separate beings in the world, and another which runs through different levels of being. In its first form sympathy permeates all parts of the cosmos, in a way that it results to some kind of unity among them. This unity may, according to Posidonius, be of three kinds: i. that of an army: individual soldiers harmonically functioning together; ii. that of a building: all its parts are adjusted to each other; iii. the kind a living being has, to wit of mutual influence and interplay of its members. The unity of cosmos in Posidonius’s view is of the third kind, as the effect of sun and moon on the earth clearly indicates. Sympathy between different levels of existence is the one that connects the known with the unknown, the gods – Posidonius considers the sun and the moon as well as the stars and the heavens in general to be gods – with the earthly world. Due to this second kind of sympathy Posidonius believes that signs may have influence on the course of events. The whole of reality for Posidonius is contained within the envelope of fiery ether, and it constitutes one world that is animated and held together due to the existence of an omnipresent soul. Edelstein correctly emphasizes that where others recognize the effects of nature, Posidonius recognizes the effects of soul, which unifies all beings and renders them a whole. The soul, as Posidonius suggests, is an omnipresent intellect that he calls God. God has no form, but can be changed into everything; he can take any form and become equal to what he wants. Still this all pervasive soul is nothing distinct or separate from nature, but just nature endowed with sensation. Thus the whole world is considered to be the substance of God, direct-

27 Ibid.
29 Ferguson, op. cit., 363.
31 Bevan, op. cit., 114.
35 Edelstein, op. cit., 300.
36 H. Usener, ed., Commenta Lucani (Leipzig, 1869), 305: “aequitatem Posidonius: deus est spiritus rationalis per omnem diffusus materiam.”
38 Diogenes Laertius, op. cit., VII, 156.
39 Ibid., 148.
ed by reason (nous) and providence (pronia), a fact that eventually allows for divination. If we accepted Posidonius’s physics as a sound one and abided by it, then we would have to admit also that all beings are interdependent and, in a way, united as well as reciprocal. For it is impossible to affect the whole without affecting the part, and vice versa. Every modification concerning the status of a part directly reflects on the whole, since the unity of the cosmos is of the kind that exists between the members of the body. Reversely, we could infer that the status of each part depends on the overall condition of the body, for it is not possible for the part to prosper if the body suffers. To realize the fact that every single human being is just a part of the whole, together with every other, organic or not, and to be mindful that all beings equally partake in a rationally ordered universe – though not necessarily rational in itself –, to the Stoics is tantamount to rational human happiness, eudaimonia. From the Stoic point of view only humans and gods may count as rational beings, but the whole of the world is organized according to reason, a fact that can be unveiled to the human intellect. It is up to each rational individual to become aware of that fact, and at the same time to realize which is its exact place in the rationally ordered context of reality. That kind of awareness would only lead to willingly living in accordance with reason, to wit with nature. And it is precisely this awareness that, as far as the Stoics are concerned, outlines the definition of virtue. For, as A. A. Long argues, from the Stoic point of view only that which is in accordance with nature can be deemed as morally valuable, and is worth acquiring for its own sake, while the opposite is to be rejected. Being virtuous, from the point of view of the Stoics, is being happy.

These last inferences outline an ethics directly deduced from the Stoics’ ontology, and could well have been drawn by the Norwegian Arne Naess, one of the most eminent and influential philosophers of our times. His Ecosophy T, after all, bears extremely close similarities with Posidonius, op. cit., 293.

40 Edelstein, op. cit., 293.
41 Diogenes Laertius, op. cit., VII, 143; cf. Cicero, De divinatione I, 6; II, 35.
Naess defines his ecosophy as "a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of soφia (or) wisdom, [which] is openly normative, [and] it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction".47 This kind of wisdom, according to Naess, calls for a certain approach towards the spectrum of existence: the universe is a whole that is being substantiated in every single being, irrespective of whether the latter is rational or not. Every being is a knot in the vast net of reality, and between them there exist bonds, due to which all beings are indissolubly connected to each other. By picturing all beings as "knots," Naess suggests that there exist no isolated entities, but only coexistent ones, which could no otherwise have existed if not related to every other. He "rejects the human-in-environment image in favor of the relational, total field image: organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations".48 One of the most eminent Deep Ecologists, Warwick Fox, in an early paper of his explains this tenet further: "...there is no firm ontological divide in the field of existence. In other words, the world simply is not divided up into independently existing subjects and objects, nor is there any bifurcation in reality between human and non-human realms. Rather all entities are constituted by their relationships. To the extent that we perceive boundaries, we fall short of deep ecological consciousness".49 Fox's clarification is crucial in order to fully grasp Naess's argument: the bonds that constitute all beings are not mere attributes or properties, but they form the very essence of all beings in a way that, if any of these bonds are modified, the very being is essentially altered; if, again, broken or vanished, the very being entirely ceases to exist as such. Therefore the relational net is ontologically prior to the individual, since each individual is constantly formed into what it actually each moment is only due to the intrinsic relations that are being formed with other knots of the web.50 The reality is one and unified, and can be

46 I avoid referring to the Stoics in general, since Posidonius's approaches are original with regard to many issues. For an excellent account concerning the originality of Posidonius's ontology and its differences to the traditional Stoic system, see Edelstein, op. cit., especially 291, 292 and 305.
shaped into any form in direct dependence to the surrounding circumstances. The individual, on the other hand, only seemingly is a separate, isolated existence; rather it is a locus for relational intersection, more a crowded meeting place than a sanctuary for the being. Due to that vast relational web or net, all beings are akin to each other, as well as interdependent. Cutting one of the threads means damaging the whole net and directly affecting each individual knot. There is no existence in vacuum, or in isolation; the total-field view calls for ontological unity. To Bill Devall dualism – the dominant theme of Western philosophy – should be rejected in favor of unity. If we perceive the reality as consistent of knots, which are more or less loca where intrinsic relations are substantiated, and if “an intrinsic relation between two things A and B is such that the relation belongs to the definitions or basic constitutions of A and B, so that without the relation, A and B are no longer the same things”, then it is nonsensical to talk of beings – “except when are talking at a superficial or preliminary level of communication”; we should rather talk of one extended all-encompassing organism. In a word, everything hangs together. As Devall puts it, “although we may feel subjectively separate from nature and each other, we are actually interdependent and interconnected with the whole fabric of reality”. It is obvious that the way we perceive ourselves has to be essentially altered. There is no such a thing as an isolated self, one that is confined by – and restricted to – our skin. On the contrary, there are parts of our self that lay outside these boundaries; as a matter of fact, from the point of view of Ecosophy T, everything seemingly external to us is actually a part of our self. All other beings, since they are devoid of rationality, are vi naturae part of this reality. Humans, on the other hand, have to intellectually grasp this ultimate truth in order to fulfill their potential, to meet with their entelecheia in Aristotelian terms. In case they succeed, they achieve “self realization”, and acquire what Naess calls “an

51 For a detailed account see my “Supernatural Will and Organic Unity in Process: From Spinoza’s Naturalistic Pantheism to Arne Naess’s Ecosophy T and Environmental Ethics,” in Studies on Supernaturalism, ed. George Arabatzis (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2009), 189ff.
54 Mathews, op. cit., 159.
56 Ibid.
57 Lenart, op. cit., 31.
extended Self. It is almost obvious that to him both these constitute the tasks of a proper Ecosophy. The first step to self-realization is identification with every other being,\textsuperscript{59} a notion very much resembling Stoic sympathy. Fox may be of help again concerning the exact import of the term: identification is “the experience not simply of a sense of similarity with an entity, but of a sense of commonality.”\textsuperscript{60} Diehm explains identification further as a “sense of belonging to or community with the other-than-human world”\textsuperscript{61}. The role of identification is crucial for Ecosophy T, since it proves Naess’s ontology and metaphysics right: if all things were not constituted by their relations to other things,\textsuperscript{62} identification could not be possible or achievable. Furthermore, identification allows for an utter recognition on behalf of the rational being, to wit of the fact that humans are a part of nature, and nature is a part of them; who they are cannot be described without reference to the all encompassing natural community.\textsuperscript{63} Apart from the fact that Naess – unlike Posidonius – directly extends this interconnectedness and consequent identification to all natural beings, and not only to rational ones, his reasoning looks like a legitimate development or furtherance of the Stoic ontology and metaphysics: all are one, no matter whether this is due to logos – which orders all natural beings and is embedded into rational ones –, or due to this all encompassing relational net. In both cases, reality is substantiated and formed by virtue of a single primordial entity or power, and it seems entirely immaterial if we call it this or that. As far as ontology and metaphysics are concerned, one would be justified to assume that Naess, if born two thousand years before, is likely to have been frequenting the Pikili Stoa,\textsuperscript{64} while, respectively, Posidonius would be likely to publish his essays with The Trumpeter.\textsuperscript{65}

One might object on grounds of Posidonius’s metaphysics being a theocratic one, while Naess’s is not. He might further focus on the fact that sympathy for Posidonius is limited to rational beings only, to wit humans, gods and stars (which he calls daemons), while identification for Naess is not with them.\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Diehm, op. cit., 3.
\item Diehm, op. cit., 4.
\item An archway in the agora of Athens, meeting place for the early Stoics, and the only reason we still call them that way.
\item The emblematic journal of Deep Ecology and Ecosophy T.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
extended to all beings, irrespective of whether they are rational or irrational, organic or not. In my opinion these differences, although actual ones, are of no essential importance. As to the first objection, suppose that Naess had been thinking of this relational net as of a god. Would his overall approach be essentially altered? In fact, it is not quite clear what exactly this net is for Naess, but it is no doubt a primordial substance and a creative power at the same time, in fact the only possible one. The essence, the attributes and the form of the reality are only due to its existence and actions. The net substantiates all beings. It is imminent in the world; in fact it is the world we perceive. It is omnipresent and, in a not farfetched sense of the terms, omnipotent and omniscient. It is of the same essence with the world. It has limits, exactly as the Posidonian universe does, and its limits are tantamount to the limits of reality. If Naess called it pnoe, pneuma or technikon pyr, would it make any difference?

As to the second objection, the one concerning the limits of sympathy on the one hand, and those of identification on the other, one could reasonably argue that differences as such are more than expected: offspring take after their forefathers and usually are a better, more advanced version of theirs, but rarely are identical, nor they have to. Extending the ability of rational beings to identify themselves with all other beings instead of limiting it to only some of them could well count as theoretical progress. The fact that, from the point of view of Stoics, irrational nature is actually rationally ordered, leaves ample room for such a perspective. I do not mean to imply that Naess is a modern Stoic or anything like that, only that his views are not a far cry from Posidonius’s ones, and in many aspects he seems to draw from the latter’s way of reasoning.

For both philosophers cosmic sympathy between beings does exist, irrespective of whether one realizes its existence or not. If he does, from the Stoic point of view, he will be able to live in accordance to nature – viz. according to reason, since logos pervades the whole natural world; and that, for the Stoics, is the quintessence of virtue, which brings about inner happiness, eudaimonia.66 Knowing his place in the world is the trait of the wise and virtuous man, and renders him capable to opt for the right actions, those that are in accordance with the natural order of beings. According to Naess, however, the ability a rational being has to become conscious of the fact that all beings are constituted solely by their relations to other beings, and thus to achieve this sort of deep understanding – which eventually facilitates self-realization, to wit the broadening of the Self –,
has quite different implications with regard to ethics. As a matter of fact, in my opinion, it leaves no place for ethics at all. This is because this new, extended Self, having already grasped the total-field view and the fact that its existence is being substantiated by its relations to all other beings—which, in turn, are external parts of its very essence—, can develop the tendency to identify with them. This tendency is not the outcome of some moral principle; rather it is an intrinsic ability of the human being, due to which his consciousness is being elaborated. By virtue of identification moral agents understand the interests of the environment as their own.67 Hence they deliberately and spontaneously champion these interests, without having to resort to any moral theory, or to some norm of any kind. As John Seed puts it, the statement “I am protecting the rainforest” develops to “I am part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking”.68 For when one’s identity is interconnected with the identity of other beings, then his experience and his existence depends on theirs. Their interests become his interests.69 According to Naess, identification results in a process “through which the interest or interests of another being are reacted to as our own interest or interests”.70 Therefore, acting on behalf of other beings requires no moralizing,71 “just as we don’t need morals to make us breathe”,72 since when we are destroying our environment we are destroying in fact what is our larger self.73 Hence, when acting in nature’s defense “we are defending our vital interests.... We are engaged in self defense”.74 In other words, rather than feeling morally compelled, we act due to an embedded to us inclination to care for some external part of ours, which, though, is still a part of our extended self. In my opinion this line of reasoning, irrespective of whether it is sound or not, constitutes nothing more than a sophisticated way of referring to an elaborated version of the instinct of self-preservation.

71 Diehm, op. cit., 5.
73 Mathews, op. cit., 354.
While for the later Stoics – and for Posidonius in particular – the notion of cosmic sympathy remains a key tenet only concerning their cosmology, for Naess the very same cosmological approach – even under a slightly different terminology – serves as a basis for an unusual ethics. If there is such a thing as moral value, and if this value is inherent in even one being, then it should be inherent to every other; if this value is considered to be absolute, then it should be considered such for the whole of creation. From the point of view of a cosmology that accepts the holistic, total-field view, this is the only way to come to terms with moral evaluation. It would be nonsensical to argue on the one hand that all beings are inextricably linked to each other as parts of an extended, all-encompassing organism, and on the other to discriminate between these parts on grounds of their moral value. That, of course, when one chooses to make use of the cosmological principle of sympathy or interconnectedness in the context of some moral theory. The Stoics, it is true, did not indulge in this temptation. To them ethics is restricted to rational beings and moral agents alone, despite the fact that moral agents may be intrinsically related by virtue of cosmic sympathy to other, non-human beings. Stoic ethics – if such an anachronism may be excused – is strictly anthropocentric, and its value theory is restricted only to the moral community of rational beings, depriving thus non-human beings from intrinsic moral value,\(^75\) a fact that to Stephens seems to suggest a kind of speciesism\(^76\) - as it becomes clearly manifest in Marcus Aurelius’s statement that all other beings are created for the sake of rational ones\(^77\) –, due to which Stoicism seems totally incompatible with Arne Naess’s views, and closer to Murray Bookchin’s Social Ecology.\(^78\) As to Ecosophy T and Deep Ecology, however, interconnectedness becomes the stable ground for ascribing equal moral value to all beings, irrespective of whether they belong to the moral community or not,\(^79\) while resultant identification makes it only senseless to turn to moral evaluation at all. True, in a world that human beings have finally achieved self-realization, as Naess suggests, ethics is no longer necessary,

\(^{75}\) Dragona-Monachou, op. cit., 27.


\(^{77}\) Marcus Aurelius, op. cit., 7.55:2.

\(^{78}\) Stephens, op. cit., 283.

\(^{79}\) As right from the first premise made clear in the platform of Deep Ecology: “The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.” See George Sessions and Bill Devall, Deep Ecology (Layton: Gibbs Smith, 1985), 70ff.
for one will be able to spontaneously opt for the beautiful act instead of the dutiful one.\textsuperscript{80} Exactly as parents do not have to resort to fancy and sophisticated moral reasoning in order to come to the aid of their children, when the latter are in danger, rational beings in Naess's new brave world will unprompted and spontaneously revere all other natural beings, for, since these are only external parts of their extended self – as their broadened consciousness can now clearly grasp –, revering and protecting them is revering and protecting their very own self.\textsuperscript{81}

It is also true, however, that in a world of interconnected, interdependent and interacting entities, there is not much room left for moral blame or praise. A knot in the vast relational net has no autonomous existence, as well as no individual responsibility. No knot can be a better, a more just one than any other. Mother Teresa, the benefactor of thousands in India, and Ed Gain, the notorious serial killer of the 60s – who murdered and skinned more than fifteen women just to decorate his house and upholster his furniture –, are both merely accidental knots in the relational net; they both existed the way they did only due to a fortuitous intersection of countless vague and fuzzy relations. Then why the former and blame the latter? Where exactly is ethics in the wide, total-field image? Why should we hold one morally responsible for his deeds, since his demeanor is only due to something which is accidental and totally external to him? And why any single act may be deemed morally superior or inferior to any other, since in this vast net of intersecting relations every entity directly owes its mode of existence – and, consequently, its behaviour – to every other, to billions of others actually? Is that not an impossible ethics? It seems that Naess's environmental ethics, while surely environmental, is barely an ethics.

NOTES


\textsuperscript{80} Connie Barlow, \textit{Green space, green time: the way of science} (New York: Springer Verlag, 1997), 2.

\textsuperscript{81} Naess, “Self-Realization,” 17.


Les derniers Stoïciens et spécialement Posidonius de l’Apamea, le plus grand érudit de son époque et le dernier d’une série des philosophes mar- quants du monde ancien, ont développé graduellement le croit que toutes les parties de l’univers, animées ou non, se trouvent actuellement en con- nexion grâce au feu mondain (kosmikon pyr) omniprésent, corporel, primordial qui, d’après les Stoïciens, pénètre chaque être comme le miel pénètre le rayon. En ce qui concerne les êtres raisonnables, kosmikon pyr prend la for- me de la raison (logos). Grâce à ce pouvoir, Posidonius croit que les phases de la lune, par exemple, peuvent affecter la succession de la marée et du re- flux; Parallèlement, les signes peuvent sérieusement influencer le cours des événements et, par conséquent, ils permettent les divinations. Ce genre d’in- terconnexion, ne justifie pas seulement l’interdépendance de tous les êtres, mais aussi leur affinité parfaite, la compassion (sympatheia). Dans ce texte je veux montrer que l’approche de Posidonius a été adoptée et utilisée par les théories contemporaines holistiques qui concernent l’éthique environne- mentale, plus particulièrement par l’Écologie Profonde et l’Écosophie d’Arne Naess, où des notions comme l’affinité, l’interconnexion, l’interdé- pendance et l’identification de tous les être sont des paramètres-clés pour l’articulation de leur argumentation. De plus, je vise à esquisser quelques différences essentielles - à mon avis - en ce qui concerne la manière avec la quelle Posidonius and Naess utilisent la notion de l’interconnexion, et aussi quelques obscurités qui pourraient être fatales, au moins en ce qui concerne un système d’éthique. Ça se passe parce que des notions comme la compas- sion mondaine peuvent peut-être établir une cosmologie ou une métaphy- sique intéressante, même charmante et influente, mais quand il s’agit de l’é- thique, elles peuvent seulement, à mon avis, offrir une terre faible où il est impossible à établir une éthique ferme, lorsque elles permettent des optiques déterministes, qui plus ou moins ne laissent pas des marges à la responsabi- lité personnelle, c’est-a-dire à l’éloge ou au blâme personnel.

Mots-clés: Posidonius, Naess, compassion, identification, stoïque, Écologie Profonde, Écosophie T, kosmikon pyr, logos, éthique