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### Refugees, Exiles, and Stoic Cosmopolitanism

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#### Abstract

The Roman imperial Stoics were familiar with exile. This paper argues that the Stoics' view of *being* a refugee differed sharply from their view of what is *owed* to refugees. A Stoic adopts the perspective of a *cosmopolitēs*, a "citizen of the world," a rational being everywhere at home in the universe. Virtue can be cultivated and practiced in any locale, so *being* a refugee is an "indifferent" that poses no obstacle to happiness. Other people are our fellow cosmic citizens, however, regardless of their language, race, ethnicity, customs, or country of origin. Our natural affinity and shared sociability with all people require us to help refugees and embrace them as welcome neighbors. Failure to do so violates our common reason, justice, and the gods' cosmic law.

Keywords: exile, refugee, Stoic, cosmopolitanism, citizen

#### Introduction

One of the earliest stories about refugees in Western literature is told by the Roman epic poet Vergil. His *Aeneid* offers a heart-rending account of the hero Aeneas carrying his aged

father Anchises on his back, while leading his little son Ascanius by the hand, from the burning ruins of Troy. Few Trojans escape both death and enslavement at the hands of the Greek soldiers sacking their city, but Aeneas gathers together the few survivors and leads them on a long, perilous voyage across the Mediterranean Sea to distant Italy. There, after much more blood is shed, the refugee Aeneas finally prevails, establishes a new home for his transplanted people, and becomes the ancestor of the Romans. Vergil's *Aeneid* may be the earliest refugee story in Latin literature (Kyle Helms, personal communication). What is certain is that the story of Aeneas and the other Trojan refugees is a tale thick with Stoic themes.

Acclaimed since his own day as the Latin epic poet par excellence, Vergil displays a profound and perceptive feeling for the ethical and metaphysical implications of Stoic philosophy. To the extent that he appeals to Stoic principles in the *Aeneid* he internalizes them thoroughly and weaves them seamlessly into the web of his epic. Yet, he subordinates them ultimately to his own personal poetic vision. Vergil's ability to grasp the inner significance of the Stoic doctrines which he uses points to the pervasive influence which this philosophy had attained in the Roman culture of his own day, for there is nothing in Vergil's own education, associations, or style of life that suggests any Stoic inclinations on his part (Colish: 225; see also Edwards).

This is one reason why an examination of Stoicism and refugees is warranted. But study of refugees through the lens of Stoic philosophy need not be limited to literary analysis of Vergil's epic for the following reason. A *refugee* is a person forced to flee his or her homeland to escape danger or persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A person removed by authority from his or her homeland is an *exile*. Thus, refugees include those who are exiled because of their political opinions or (alleged) seditious activities. Exile was a frequent threat and a common punishment for many prominent Romans, including philosophers. The Stoic philosophers Seneca, Musonius Rufus, and Epictetus were all expelled by imperial authority from Rome. Therefore, how the Roman imperial Stoics thought about exile, and how Stoic ideas apply to refugees, is worth investigating.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca – statesman, orator, tragedian, leading intellectual, and prolific author – was accused of adultery with emperor Claudius' niece in 41 CE and exiled to Corsica for eight years. Gaius Musonius Rufus, the Roman knight (*eques*) and acclaimed Stoic teacher, chose to accompany his friend Rubellius Plautus into exile when Nero banished Plautus around 60 CE. After Plautus died, Musonius returned to Rome under the reign of Galba to teach and practice Stoicism. When Nero discovered the great conspiracy against him led by Calpurnius Piso in 65 CE, Nero ordered Seneca to commit suicide. Nero exiled Musonius to the island of Gyara in the Aegean Sea where, despite the notoriously desolate surroundings, Musonius reportedly continued to attract and teach students and conducted himself admirably (Reydams-Schils 2005: 103-4). Musonius's most influential student was Epictetus. In 90 CE emperor Domitian expelled Epictetus and other philosophers from Rome because Stoics favorably received opponents of the emperor's tyranny.

So, the Stoics of the Roman empire were very familiar with exile. What did they think of it? I will argue that the Stoics' view of *being* an exile differed sharply from their view of how

exiles ought to be *treated*. Specifically, the Stoics theorized that exile is among the things that are neither good nor bad in themselves, so being an exile is in fact indifferent to one's happiness. Given this striking position, we might expect the Stoics to have no sympathy for refugees. Since those in exile suffer no evil, according to Stoic ethical theory, we might suppose that the Stoics believe that refugees and exiles are not suffering at all and so need no help. I will show that this supposition is mistaken. While Stoics regard living in exile as no obstacle to happiness, they are far from indifferent toward refugees and exiles. Rather, Stoics believe they must welcome and assist exiles because it is only right to do so. I will explain below how Stoic ethics entail this call to aid exiles.

### What Exile is and Why it is No Evil

The natural place to start is Musonius Rufus's essay *That Exile is Not an Evil*. This essay purports to be his reply to a person complaining about being exiled. One scholar has argued that in this essay Musonius adopts an exilic *persona* borrowed synthetically from the repertoire of Greek culture (Whitmarsh: 277). My interest focuses on the ten arguments presented in support of the essay's title. Musonius offers three types of reason for thinking that exile is not an evil: (a) in exile we retain various valuable things, (b) we are rid of several nuisances, and (c) we (can) gain certain advantages. Specifically, (a) in exile we retain the company of true friends, the ability to acquire virtue, essential resources, free and candid speech (*parrhēsia*), the world itself, and the ability to endure exile; (b) exile rids us of false friends, distracting relatives, pointless political service, and soft, luxurious living that causes chronic illness; and (c) in exile one gains leisure and the opportunity to do good, and one can gain fame, improved bodily health, and the virtues of courage, justice, self-control, and wisdom. I now turn to examine Musonius's ten arguments for the thesis that exile is not an evil and nothing to be upset about.

The logic of the first argument (*Exile* 9.1; King: 44) may be easier to follow if it is reconstructed in regimented form.

1. Exile does not deprive us of water, earth, air, or the sun and the other stars.
2. Everywhere and in every way we have fellowship with other human beings.
3. Hence, exile does not deprive us of human companionship.
4. Before our exile, we did not use all of the earth.
5. Hence, if we are removed from a certain part of the earth and from certain people, then this is not terrible.
6. Our true, worthwhile friends would never betray or abandon us.
7. Hence, even in exile we can associate with our true friends.
8. If some of our acquaintances are insincere and false friends, then we are better off being removed from them (by exile) than associating with them.
9. Therefore, no sensible person can be upset by being in exile.

Recall Musonius did not abandon Rubellius Plautus when he was sent into exile, but instead remained true to his friend by faithfully sharing exile with him. In this first argument Musonius reasons that exile deprives us neither of what we need to survive (air to breathe, water to drink,

the light and heat of the sun), nor of the company of our real friends. Thus, we retain both what we need to sustain our bodies and what we need to bolster our spirits, so exile is no evil.

Musonius' second argument appeals to the idea of cosmic citizenship. For the sake of thematic continuity, I will postpone examining this argument until the penultimate section below, which is on cosmopolitanism.

In his third argument Musonius contrasts real needs with superfluities. What we really need, he stresses, are learning and virtue. He reasons as follows:

1. In exile people are not dragged into political service by a country that only seems to be theirs.
2. In exile people are not bothered by those who merely seem to be friends.
3. In exile people are not bothered by relatives who keep them preoccupied and distract them from their search for better things.
4. Hence, exile provides people leisure and more opportunity to do good things than they had before they were exiled.
5. Hence, exile never deprived anyone from learning what he needs to do and from acting accordingly.
6. Therefore, exile cannot stop anyone from caring for his real needs and from acquiring virtue.

As in the first argument, here too the distinction between true friends and false friends figures prominently. In exile, we are spared being pestered by people who merely pretend to be our friends. Musonius also implicitly makes a parallel distinction between one's true country and one's false country. Political service to one's true country is worthwhile, but political service to a country that only pretends to be ours – our false country – is wasted drudgery. Exile spares us of the latter. Even some of our relatives deflect us from the pursuit of better goals, so exile shields us from their interference too. Exile provides us the opportunity to learn that acquiring virtue and doing good things are what it's worth our while to do.

Musonius adds to the potential benefits of exile in his fourth argument. He observes that exile transformed Diogenes from an ordinary person in his hometown of Sinope into a toughened philosopher – the first Cynic – who surpassed the other philosophers in his practice of virtue. Soft, luxurious living gave Spartiatikos the Lacedaemonian and others a weak chest, gout, and chronic illnesses. But exile accustomed them to live more austere, “to follow a more manly lifestyle” (*Exile* 9.4; King: 45), and restored their health. “Thus, by improving people, exile helps them more than it hurts them with respect to both body and soul” (*Exile* 9.4; King: 45). So, all things considered, Musonius concludes that for some people exile has even been advantageous.

In his fifth argument Musonius elaborates on and emphasizes the distinction between manly austerity and soft living introduced in his previous argument.

1. Lazy and shiftless exiles who are unable to act like men even when they are not in exile are generally at a loss and lack resources.

2. Wherever noble, industrious, and intelligent men go into exile, they flourish and do not feel deprived.
3. Hence, we do not need many things unless we want to have a soft life.
4. Therefore, exiles lack nothing essential.

Musonius proceeds to defend an even stronger claim in his sixth argument: “men who are worthwhile not only would easily acquire the things most necessary for life when they are away from their home, but often would acquire many possessions as well” (*Exile* 9.6; King: 46). He cites the examples of Odysseus, Themistocles, and Dion of Syracuse. When Odysseus arrived among the Phaeacians he was alone, naked, and shipwrecked – clearly worse off than any exile. Yet, despite the Phaeacians being strangers to him, Odysseus was able to acquire many possessions. When Themistocles was exiled from his home, instead of seeking help from friends he went to his enemies the Persians. Musonius says that the Persians presented Themistocles with the cities of Myus, Magnesia, and Lampsacus from which he could glean his living expenses. Musonius tells an even grander story about Dion the Syracusan. Dion was robbed of all his property and expelled from his homeland of Sicily by the tyrant Dionysius. Yet in exile Dion obtained enough money to raise an army of mercenaries, invade Sicily, and depose Dionysius.

What of reputation? Musonius denies that exile necessarily stains one’s reputation in his seventh argument. “Everyone knows, after all, that many cases are judged wrongly, that many people are thrown out of their fatherland unjustly, and that some men who were good have been driven out by their fellow citizens” (*Exile* 9.7; King: 46). Aristides the Just (from Athens) and Hermodorus (from Ephesus) are his examples of men unjustly exiled. Diogenes of Sinope and Clearchus the Lacedaemonian are his examples of men whose fame actually grew in exile.

In his eighth argument Musonius challenges the claim that exiles lose their freedom of speech (*parrhēsia*). First, he makes the qualification that “we should not say what we think always, everywhere, and to anyone at all” (*Exile* 9.8; King: 47). Then he construes exercising one’s freedom of speech as not keeping quiet about what one thinks. And what silences people?

People do not refrain from saying what they think because they are exiles; they refrain because they fear that they will suffer pain, death, penalty, or some other such thing for speaking. By Zeus, it is not exile but fear that silences people. Those who still live in their own country – most people, that is – fear things that seem dangerous. The courageous man is as courageous in exile as he was at home; therefore he also says as boldly what he thinks when exiled as when he was not an exile (*Exile* 9.8; King: 47).

Exile does not silence people; fear does. This idea that it is not external conditions (e.g., exile) that make people act or refrain from acting (e.g., be silent), but rather their emotional responses (e.g., fear), is a common refrain in the lectures of Musonius’s student Epictetus. In this text Musonius notes that most people fear things that seem dangerous to them. Of course, most people are not Stoics, and most people lack courage. But since courage goes everywhere the courageous person goes, exile will not deprive the courageous person of his free speech.

Musonius completes this argument with two examples of men whom exile never robbed of free speech – Diogenes the Cynic and he himself.

Musonius's self-reference marks the transition to his ninth argument, which links enduring exile with virtue.

Have you or anyone else seen me crouching before anyone because I am an exile, or have you seen me thinking that my condition is worse than before? By Zeus, you must admit that you have never seen me groaning or moaning because of my exile. Even if someone has deprived us of our country, he has not taken away our ability to endure exile (*Exile* 9.9; King: 47-48).

The ability to endure cannot be taken from Musonius or anyone else. He explains that he has shown why he denies that exile completely deprives a person of the things which many people *consider* good. But Musonius is a Stoic, and Stoics deny that what many people consider to be good is truly good. Non-Stoics consider pleasure, bodily health, wealth, material possessions, fame, prestige, political power, and similar things to be goods. So, Musonius reasons, even if exile deprives one of some or all of these supposed goods, exile does not deprive one of things that are truly good. Stoics maintain that the only true goods are virtues.

The person in exile is not prevented from having courage, justice, self-control, wisdom, or any other virtue, just because he is in exile. When these qualities are present, they tend to honor and benefit a person and show him to be deserving of praise and fame. The absence of these qualities works to harm and shame him by showing him to be bad and without fame. Consequently, if you are a good and virtuous person, exile would not harm or diminish you, because you still have the things that can best assist and elevate you. And if you happen to be a bad person, it is vice, not exile, that harms you – vice, not exile, that brings you grief. You must work on freeing yourself from vice rather than from exile (*Exile* 9.10; King: 48).

The virtues give us the ability to endure exile and, for that matter, every other condition that non-Stoics suppose are hardships. Accordingly, evil, not exile, is a terrible thing that afflicts everyone it touches with misery.

The tenth and final argument in Musonius's lecture on exile concerns the virtue of justice and the evil of injustice. That argument too will be taken up in the section on cosmopolitanism, after study of Epictetus's and Seneca's remarks about exile.

Epictetus discusses exile in passages scattered throughout the *Discourses* and the *Handbook*. Like any good teacher, Epictetus is ever mindful of the opinions his students firmly hold when they enter his classroom. His students begin their education in Stoicism indoctrinated as non-Stoics. Out of deeply ingrained habit non-Stoics give immediate credence to how things appear instead of scrutinizing those appearances.

Outside of the classroom, if we see a person grieving, we say "He's devastated." If we see a consul, we say, "He's a lucky guy." If we see someone in exile, we say "How miserable." If we see a beggar, we say "Wretched man, he's got nothing to eat." These are the sorry judgments we need to concentrate

hard to eradicate (*Discourses* 3.3.17-18; translations of Epictetus are mine though I consult Oldfather; Gill and Hard; and Dobbin 2008).

Most people believe that exile is a terrible thing, even those who have never been exiled themselves. But Epictetus rejects this popular belief of non-Stoics. He believes that the *belief* that exile is bad is a terrible, sorry thing. It is that belief that a Stoic must work diligently to eliminate.

An effective technique for eliminating the false belief that exile is bad is to frequently think about exile and other things that *look* like they are terrible. “Every day keep your eyes on death, exile, and everything that looks like it is terrible – death most of all – and you will never have a vile thought, nor desire anything too much” (*Handbook* 21). The daily practice of rehearsing the possibility of exile, death, and all seemingly awful events occurring serves as a kind of mental hygiene or calisthenics. It cleanses the mind of contemptible thoughts and reigns in immoderately strong desires. This cognitive training is vital for liberating oneself from the fears that enslave most people. Epictetus says “Prepare yourself, as Plato says, not just for death, but for torture, exile, flogging – and the loss of everything that does not belong to you. Otherwise, you will be a slave among slaves” (*Discourses* 4.1.172-73). Fear makes non-Stoics slaves, according to Epictetus. No one fears Caesar himself, it is death, exile, loss of property, prison, and disenfranchisement they fear (*Discourses* 4.1.60). Non-Stoics fear losing what they believe belongs to them. Non-Stoics believe that their material possessions, wealth, good health, their very bodies, and living in their home country belong to them, whereas Stoics reject these beliefs as false. Since non-Stoics cling to these false beliefs about what things are truly theirs, they are dangerously unprepared to lose them. Non-Stoics set themselves up for misery by creating fears about the loss of things that can all too easily be lost.

One’s native country is one such thing that can be lost. So, what if a tyrant were to threaten to exile Epictetus? Epictetus says that in this case, the tyrant is threatening his entire body, namely, to expel his body to a foreign land. But, if he feels that exile is nothing to him and does not fear it, then *Epictetus* is not threatened, even a little. Whereas if Epictetus fears anything the tyrant could do to him, then yes, it is Epictetus himself who is threatened (*Discourses* 1.29.6-8). This is why a person’s value judgments about what is good, bad, and neither good nor bad, are crucial. A person’s value judgments determine what he will regard as a threat and what he will fear. A real philosopher works to habitually make the right judgments. These right judgments will rid him of fear.

A man Epictetus admires for not fearing exile is the Stoic philosopher Quintus Paconius Agrippinus. Epictetus tells the following story about him. Agrippinus received word that he was on trial in the senate – the kind of news that upsets non-Stoics. But Agrippinus calmly kept to his usual daily schedule of exercising at a particular hour in the morning. When he finished working out, the news arrived that he had been condemned.

“To exile,” he asked, “or death?” “Exile.” “And what of my property?” “It has not been confiscated.” “Well then, let’s go to my villa in Aricia and have lunch there.” This shows what is possible when we practice what is necessary, and make our desire and aversion safe from any setback or adversity (*Discourses* 1.1.28-30.)

Agrippinus's equanimity preserved his daily routine, despite being convicted and sentenced to exile. Neither his exercise nor his lunch need be disrupted by the senate's punishment. After all, what the senate does is not up to him, but deciding when to exercise and when and where to have lunch is up to him. Agrippinus has trained himself to desire only what he has power over – his decisions – and not to be afraid of exile, senators, or anything beyond his power. This Stoic practice is necessary to guarantee that our desires are never frustrated and our aversions are never realized. Exile deprives us of nothing that is necessary for living safe from misfortune. Agrippinus can adapt to whatever happens. If he is banished from Rome, then he can simply travel sixteen miles or so to Aricia and have lunch there. Food is as available there as it is in Rome.

This story about Agrippinus illustrates that the punishment of exile is of very limited scope, so limited, in fact, that it is nothing to fear. Those with the legal authority to banish are far too weak to throw anyone off the planet.

Exile? Where can they expel me? Nowhere outside the world, since wherever I end up, the sun will be there, the moon will be there, and the stars, there will be dreams, birds of augury, and other means of keeping in touch with the gods (*Discourses* 3.22.22).

Here Epictetus repeats Musonius's text in *That Exile is Not an Evil* (9.1; King: 44) and adds the remark about dreams and augury.

And exile? Wherever I go it will be fine with me, for it was fine with me here, not because of the location, but because of my judgments which I shall carry with me. For no one can take these away from me, rather they are the only things that are mine, and they cannot be taken away, and I am content to possess them wherever I am and whatever I do (*Discourses* 4.7.14).

A person's judgments cannot be misplaced, left behind, or lost like keys. A person cannot be robbed of her values, like she can be of her purse. A Stoic's identity lies in her beliefs, judgments, values, choices, intentions, and desires. These are the things that make her the kind of person she is. The good for a Stoic consists in her self-respect and integrity of character. These things she always takes with her into exile anywhere and everywhere.

Like Epictetus, Seneca too distrusts ill-considered popular opinions about what things are good and bad, including the popular opinion about exile. In the *Consolation to Helvia* (*Helvia*) Seneca writes: "disregarding the judgment of the majority, who are carried away by the outward appearance of things, whatever the grounds for trusting it, let's consider what exile really is. Of course, a change of location" (6.1; Fantham et al.: 52). Seneca observes that the rockiest, most barren islands – Sciathus, Seriphus, Gyara, and Cossura – are places of exile where some find it pleasant to stay by choice. Despite being barren rocks surrounded by dangerous cliffs, with the meagerest resources, the most uncivilized people, the most rugged topography, and the most intemperate climate, these islands are populated by more foreigners than natives. Seneca reasons that since some have voluntarily left their homeland to relocate to these places, a change of place is far from being a hardship (*Helvia* 6.4-5). Exile is only a change of place. A change of place is no hardship. So, Seneca rejects the popular opinion that exile is a hardship.



Exiles are often burdened by poverty. Does not poverty threaten happiness? Seneca does not think so: “Nothing is ever enough for greed, but for nature even too little is enough. The poverty of an exile therefore involves no hardship; for no place of exile is so lacking in resources that it can’t amply support a person” (*Helvia* 10.11; Fantham et al.: 60). Seneca is confident that even in exile a person armed with reason and resourcefulness can sustain himself. Consequently, Seneca states that exile is an empty word (*vanum nomen*) and no evil (*On the Happy Life* 21.1). This is a consequence of the Stoic doctrine that virtue is the only true good, vice the only true evil, and everything else is neither good nor evil but an indifferent. Seneca explains this doctrine as follows:

I say that the following are indifferents (that is, that they are neither good nor bad): illness, pain, poverty, exile, death. Not one of these is glorious in itself, yet nothing is glorious without them. For what we praise is not poverty but the person who is not humbled or bowed down by poverty; not exile but the person who went into exile with a braver face than he would have worn when sending another . . . All such things are not in themselves either honorable or glorious, but any of them that virtue meets and handles is made honorable and glorious by it. In themselves, they are intermediate” (*Letters on Ethics* 82.10-12; Long and Graver: 273).

The idea is that being in exile neither honors nor dishonors a person. Rather, it is how he conducts himself in exile that is either good or bad, noble or base, honorable or dishonorable. One’s location neither exalts nor disgraces anyone.

Seneca offers a grim reminder about where everyone ends up: “[Death] shows exiles who are always straining their minds and eyes toward their homeland that it does not matter beneath whose soil one is buried” (*Consolation to Marcia* 20.2; Fantham et al.: 27). Since death sooner or later overtakes us all, everybody ends up in the ground, in the same place, as it were. The grave is everyone’s final destination. Thus, Seneca regards the country in which one’s grave is located as inconsequential. With this sobering reflection on death Seneca sees no reason to worry about which land one lives in.

During his eight-year exile on Corsica, Seneca wrote to console his mother Helvia. In this consolation, he presents an extended argument against the opinion that his exile is an evil thing for him. Seneca explains that he has determined to conquer Helvia’s grief, not to dupe it. He will do this by showing that (a) in exile he experiences nothing that could cause him to be called wretched; (b) there is nothing about his exile that could make his relatives wretched on his account; and (c) his mother’s lot, which depends completely on his, is not hard to bear (*Helvia* 4.1).

Seneca argues as follows. First, he notes that emigrants have many different reasons for leaving their country and seeking a new one.

The destruction of their cities by enemy attack forced some to escape to foreign lands when they were robbed of their own; some were dislodged by political discord at home; some were sent out to relieve the burden caused by overcrowding of an excessive population; some were driven out by disease, by frequent earthquakes, or by some unbearable deficiencies in the unproductive

soil; some were beguiled by overblown reports of a fertile shore. Different people have been led by different causes to leave their homes, but this at least is clear: nothing has stayed where it came into being. The human race is constantly running this way and that, in a world so vast something changes every day: the foundations of new cities are laid and new names of nations emerge, while older powers are obliterated or transformed into a subsidiary of a stronger power. But all these migrations of peoples – what are they but states of communal exile? (*Helvia* 7.4-5; Fantham et al.: 54).

Here Seneca adopts a global perspective – human beings are always on the move, traveling, and migrating in a world that itself constantly changes. Political exiles and war refugees are just two of the many groups engaged in ongoing relocation.

Seneca observes that victors and vanquished alike were scattered throughout strange lands by the Trojan War. He adduces the legend of Aeneas: “To be sure, the Roman empire itself looks back to an exile as its founder – a refugee from his captured city who, taking with him its few survivors, was forced by fear of the conqueror to make for distant parts and was brought to Italy” (*Helvia* 7.7; Fantham et al.: 54-55). Thus, Seneca reasons that the displacement of peoples over the globe is nothing new, unusual, or troubling. Mobility is an inevitable fact of the human condition. Immigrants are the ancestors of virtually everyone on earth.

To sum up, you’ll scarcely find any land which is still lived in by its original inhabitants; every population consists of mixed and foreign stock. One people has come after another, what one has viewed with disdain another has ardently desired, and one people has expelled another only to be driven out itself. So, it is by decree of fate that nothing remains where it is in the same condition forever. To offset the actual change of place, and barring the other disadvantages that attach to exile, Varro, the most learned of Romans, holds that this is remedy enough, that wherever we come, we inevitably experience the same order of nature. Marcus Brutus thinks it a sufficient compensation that exiles can take with them their own virtues. Even if anyone judges these two considerations, taken individually, inadequate to comfort the exile, he’ll admit that they are extremely effective in combination. For how little it is that we actually lose! Wherever we go, the two finest attributes will go with us – universal nature and individual virtue (*Helvia* 7.10-8.2; Fantham et al.: 55)

This is the key premise in Seneca’s argument that being in exile is no evil. Seneca and Musonius Rufus agree that universal nature and her own virtue accompany the refugee wherever she goes. Universal nature equips a human being with reason and intelligence, and when fully cultivated and perfected, reason and intelligence become virtue. Thus, the Stoic refugee’s rational abilities and virtues of character enable her to adapt to the order of nature anywhere and everywhere. Exile cannot rob the Stoic of her virtuous mind, which is all she needs to live happily in accord with the order of nature.

The Stoics’ conception of virtue is powerfully democratic in that virtue is available to everyone. Seneca writes: “Virtue closes the door to no one. It is open to all, admits all, invites all, the freeborn and freedmen and slaves and kings and exiles. Neither household nor wealth

in property determines its choice – it is content with the naked human being” (*On Benefits* 3.18.2; my translation). This tenet is crucial to Seneca’s account because of how it connects with the most controversial doctrine of Stoic ethics, namely, the contention that virtue is the only true good. Seneca describes the doctrine like this: “Whatever is best for mankind lies beyond human control, and can be neither given nor taken away” (*Helvia* 8.4; Fantham et al.: 56). This is because all that is best for a person lies in the mind. “Even places of exile are adequate for essentials, but not even kingdoms for superfluities. It’s the mind that makes us rich; it follows us into exile, and in the harshest wildernesses, when it has found enough there to support the body, it takes delight in its own plentiful goods” (*Helvia* 11.4-5; Fantham et al.: 61). The wealth of virtue that the mind carries with it is effortlessly portable. On the Stoic view, then, only the body can be banished.

And so the mind cannot ever be exiled, liberated as it is and akin to the gods and equal to all the world and all ages; for its thought moves around the entire heavens and is granted access to the whole of time, past and future. This mere body, the soul’s prison and chain, is tossed this way and that; punishments are inflicted on it, and villainies and diseases. But the mind itself is sacred and eternal, and no violent hand can be laid on it (*Helvia* 11.7; Fantham et al.: 61-62).

The body is vulnerable to robbery, prison, and exile. The mind, however, cannot be touched. The mind is free to think of any place, any time, and anything, no matter where the body is. This is why Seneca regards the mind as at home everywhere in this world and in any cosmic realm beyond it. His argument concludes: “let us hasten with undaunted step wherever circumstances lead us, let us travel over any lands whatsoever: no place of exile [can] be found in the world, [since nothing in the world] is alien to mankind” (*Helvia* 8.5; Fantham et al.: 56). The human mind can grasp the order of nature and the kinship of reason that human beings share with the gods. Therefore, Seneca reasons, a human being can be at home everywhere in the world because, from this Stoic perspective, the world itself *is* our home. Being exiled is no hardship and no evil to the Stoic because exile can only displace his body from one corner of his home to another. But no corner of his home is alien to him. Nor does any location alter his identity as a rational being capable of virtue. Nowhere can he be alienated from his sense of belonging to and in the cosmos. This is what Seneca means when he says that “to the wise man every place is his homeland” (*Helvia* 9.7; Fantham et al.: 58).

### Exile and Friends in Need

In Stoic ethics the familial, social, civic, and occupational roles we play guide our actions in a wide array of situations (see Johnson). Some roles we are born into. Others we choose. Others are forced upon us. We choose our friends but not our parents. We become a refugee when that role is forced upon us. How might our role as a friend dictate dealing with exile? Epictetus provides a clue when discussing the limited purpose of divination. He explains that divination should be used only to learn about a future outcome, not when reason can be used to solve a problem.

Do not, for example, resort to divination if you are duty-bound to come to the defense of your country or share in some danger threatening a friend. Suppose the seer declares the omens unfavorable – which, in cases like this, could spell

exile for you, physical injury, even death. And still reason demands that you stick by your friend, or help defend your country (*Handbook* 32.3; Dobbin: 236).

Our role as a citizen of a particular country dictates that when our country is threatened, we defend it. Similarly, our role as friend dictates that when danger threatens our friend, we face that danger with our friend. Defending our country and facing danger alongside our friend come with risks. Defending our country from tyranny, for example, could result in the tyrant punishing us with exile, bodily injury, or execution. Sharing in a danger that faces our friend could also result in us being exiled, physically harmed, or killed. We already know these things, so we certainly do not need to consult a diviner to find out what is portended. Portents of the future cannot tell us what we ought to do now. Rather, Epictetus insists, reason all by itself dictates that we do what we can to defend our country, no matter what. Reason demands that we must stick by our friend, come what may.

Does the imperative to stick by your friend, no matter the risk, suggest how you ought to treat a refugee? Epictetus completes this text by remarking that all we have to do is to “consult the greatest prophet of all, the Pythian Apollo: he threw out of his temple someone who had not helped his friend when he was being attacked” (*Handbook* 32.3). Epictetus clearly thinks that Apollo wants us to help defend our friends from attack. Refugees are often attacked. But it would be too much of a stretch to interpret this text as implying that we ought to help defend refugees from attack. That is because our friends are unlikely to be refugees. For most of us it is far more likely that refugees are total strangers to us. Should we meet and become acquainted with a refugee, over time he or she may become our friend. Yet Epictetus’s imperative to stick by your friend does not necessitate that you must stick by a refugee (or an exile) who is not your friend.

But what of a friend who is exiled? To the question “Why make a friend?” Seneca replies: “To have someone I can die for, someone I can accompany into exile, someone whose life I can save, even by laying down my own” (*Letters on Ethics* 9.10; Long and Graver: 41-42). For a Stoic, though one’s own exile is not a burden, Seneca explains that sharing in your friend’s exile is just the sort of thing friends do. As seen above, Musonius Rufus confirmed this by sharing his friend Rubellius Plautus’s exile. Nevertheless, the obligations of a Stoic to exiles and refugees that are not her friends cannot be securely derived from one’s role as a friend. A different role is needed for that purpose.

### **Cosmopolitanism and the Idea of Dual Citizenship**

Given the Stoics’ view that being in exile constitutes no hardship for the person in exile, this might suggest that people in exile need no help at all. The Stoics’ position that exile is no evil and so does not detract from the exiled person’s happiness might seem to indicate that those who are not exiled need not be concerned with those who are. If exile is an indifferent, then would not a Stoic be indifferent toward exiles? Contrary to what we might expect, Stoics emphatically reject the view that exiles are not our concern and warrant no action on our part. Stoics are not at all indifferent to the needs of exiles. Indeed, Stoic ethics demands that exiles be welcomed into our communities, embraced by us as new neighbors, and provided refuge.

I now return to Musonius's second argument in *That Exile is Not an Evil*. He appeals to the authority of Socrates (see Opsomer: 281-85) to argue as follows:

1. A reasonable person believes that to be exiled is to be deprived only of a certain city.
2. A reasonable person neither applauds a place nor rejects it because he holds it responsible for his happiness or unhappiness.
3. A reasonable person relies on himself for his whole well-being and happiness.
4. Socrates (correctly) believed that the world is the common homeland of all human beings.
5. Hence, a reasonable person considers himself to be a citizen of the city of Zeus which is populated by human beings and gods.
6. Hence, if you go away from where you were born and raised, you must not consider yourself to be exiled from your homeland.
7. A person who lives in his own homeland but in a different house from the one in which he was born would be silly and ridiculous to complain and moan about this.
8. Likewise, someone who thinks it a misfortune to be living in a different city from the one in which he happens to have been born could reasonably be considered to be witless and mindless (*Exile* 9.2-3; King: 44-45).

The city of Zeus populated by human beings and gods is the cosmic city (*cosmopolis*). The citizen (*politēs*) of the cosmic city is the cosmopolitan (*cosmopolitēs*). So, Musonius thinks that belief in cosmopolitanism, coupled with committed self-reliance, defeats the belief that exile is an evil. Exiles who bemoan their fate reject cosmopolitanism due to the silly notion that their homeland is far narrower than it really is.

Musonius ends his lecture on exile by considering whether, in a particular case, the punishment of exile is just. His argument takes the form of a constructive dilemma (Either p or q. If p, then r. If q, then s. Therefore, either r or s).

Indeed, one of two things must be the case: you are in exile either unjustly or justly. If justly, how is it correct or proper to be upset over just things? If unjustly, our exile is caused not by our wickedness but by the wickedness of the people who sent us into exile. (And in this case *they* are wicked, since, by Zeus, acting unjustly – the thing which has befallen them – is the thing most hated by the gods.) (*Exile* 9.11; King: 48).

We should embrace a just punishment, not be upset by it. So, if someone is justly exiled, then that outcome is good, not bad. But if someone is unjustly exiled, then it is the authorities who imposed that unjust punishment that are guilty of injustice. They are to blame for this wicked act, not the person who is the victim of the injustice. So, the tacit conclusion of this constructive dilemma is: either (r) it is wrong to be upset over being justly exiled, or (s) it is wrong to be upset over the injustice and wickedness of those who unjustly exiled us. Either way, our exile is not upsetting.

A non-Stoic may object to (s) and argue that we ought to be upset by the unjust, wicked deeds of others. But Stoics follow Socrates in holding that unjust deeds harm the perpetrator of the injustice, not the victim of the injustice. We are not responsible for the wickedness of others, so it is not our concern. Stoics think we ought to concern ourselves with acting justly ourselves, not worry about how others act. That is on them.

Indeed, Musonius asserts, the gods hate unjust actions most of all. He concludes: “Both the gods and fair-minded men will agree that those who have been wronged – those like ourselves – deserve help, not hatred” (*Exile* 9.11; King: 48). Justice requires that we help victims of injustice, according to Musonius. These would include both persons unjustly exiled and, I argue, persons forced to flee their homeland to escape danger or persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Surely refugees deserve to be endangered and persecuted no more than those unjustly exiled deserve to be exiled. Thus, by Musonius’s logic, both the gods and fair-minded people would agree that non-refugees owe help, not hatred, to refugees.

Moreover, an obligation to aid exiles can also be derived from Seneca’s version of Stoic cosmopolitanism. He explains that the cosmopolitan has dual roles that reflect dual commonwealths.

Let’s embrace the idea that there are two commonwealths. The one is vast and truly common to all, and includes the gods as well as mankind; within it, we look neither to this mere corner nor to that, but we measure the boundaries of our state by the sun’s course. The other is the one in which we are enrolled by the circumstances of our birth – I mean Athens or Carthage or any other city that belongs not to the whole of mankind but to a particular population. Certain people give devoted service to both commonwealths, the greater and the lesser, at the same time; some serve only the lesser, some only the greater (*On Leisure* 4.1; Fantham et al.: 224).

Seneca implies in this text that it is a challenge to successfully serve both the greater and the lesser commonwealths. Those of modest ambition aim to serve one commonwealth or the other. But is not Seneca urging his fellow Stoics to tackle the loftier task of serving both commonwealths?

A Stoic who seems to have taken up the challenge of serving both commonwealths was the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. From an early age Marcus was groomed for imperial rule by emperor Hadrian. Since he enjoyed the emperor’s favor, Marcus never faced the possibility of exile like Seneca, Musonius Rufus, and Epictetus did. Indeed, when he became emperor Marcus gained the authority to banish others. In his private journal that has come to be known as the *Meditations*, Marcus reminds himself: “What benefits anyone is to do what his own nature requires. And mine is rational. Rational and civic. My city and state are Rome – as Antoninus. But as a human being? The world. So, for me, ‘good’ can only mean what is good for both communities” (*Meditations* 6.44; Hays: 79). Marcus echoes both Seneca’s and Musonius’s affirmation of Stoic cosmopolitanism, according to which every rational person is endowed with a kind of dual citizenship. In Marcus’s case, he was born into the city of Rome and took the name “Antoninus” when he was adopted by his maternal uncle. Thus, as an individual born at a particular place and time, Marcus became a citizen of Rome. But his

humanity and rationality, shared with all other human beings, also made Marcus a citizen of the world (*cosmopolitēs*). Thus, the Stoics believe that everyone is simultaneously a member of two communities, one local, the other global. For Marcus, this means that his good must consist in doing good for both Rome (the microcosm) and the world (the macrocosm).

Doing good for Rome is easy to understand but perhaps rather difficult to accomplish. In his role as emperor, Marcus's duty is to work to benefit all residents of the empire. But his duties extend beyond governing Roman citizens. Marcus is also a citizen of the entire world, which is populated by all rational beings of all nations. Marcus reflects:

If thought is something we share, then so is reason – what makes us reasoning beings. If so, then the reason that tells us what to do and what not to do is also shared. And if so, we share a common law. And thus, are fellow citizens. And fellow citizens of something. And in that case, our state must be the *world*. What other entity could all of humanity belong to? And from it – from this state that we share – come thought and reason and law (*Meditations* 4.4; Hays: 38-39).

Since we share the ability to think and the ability to reason with all human beings, Marcus deduces that this shared reason also dictates what we should and should not do. Reason dictates what is good or bad, right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, just or unjust. So, the argument goes, the shared reason of all human beings makes everyone fellow citizens of the whole world. Our shared humanity makes us all neighbors living in the same shared community as intimately interconnected as limbs of the same body or bees in a hive (see Stephens 2012: 89-100).

Marcus and Epictetus both emphasize the organic nature of the social connection among all human beings. Marcus invokes a graphic bodily image to illustrate the violence one inflicts upon oneself by severing oneself from the social whole.

Have you ever seen a severed hand or foot, or a decapitated head, just lying somewhere far away from the body it belonged to . . . ? That's what we do to ourselves – or try to do – when we rebel against what happens to us, when we segregate ourselves. Or when we do something selfish. You have torn yourself away from unity – your natural state, one you were born to share in. Now you've cut yourself off from it. But you have one advantage here: you can reattach yourself. A privilege God has granted to no other part of no other whole – to be separated, cut away, and reunited (*Meditations* 8.34; Hays: 107-108).

In a similar text Marcus describes an arboreal image to express the idea of social cohesion and the need people must preserve solidarity with one another.

A branch cut away from the branch beside it is simultaneously cut away from the whole tree. So too a human being separated from another is cut loose from the whole community. The branch is cut off by someone else. But people cut themselves off – through hatred, through rejection – and don't realize that they're cutting themselves off from the whole civic enterprise. Except that we also have a gift, given us by Zeus, who founded this community of ours. We

can reattach ourselves and become once more components of the whole. But if the rupture is too often repeated, it makes the severed part hard to reconnect, and to restore. You can see the difference between the branch that's been there since the beginning, remaining on the tree and growing with it, and the one that's been cut off and grafted back. 'One trunk, two minds.' As the gardeners put it (*Meditations* 11.8; Hays: 149-50).

To hate foreigners and reject refugees is to sever oneself from the greater commonwealth, as Seneca calls it, or the whole civic enterprise, as Marcus terms it. Thus, the Stoics regard xenophobia as a kind of self-inflicted mental disease. Yet Marcus believes that we also possess the remedy to this disease. We can cure ourselves of fear and hatred of those forced to flee their homelands in search of refuge in a new land, a new lesser commonwealth. We heal ourselves by reattaching ourselves to the greater commonwealth, affirming our identity as cosmopolitans, and reconnecting ourselves to the whole that unites all citizens of the world.

### How to Treat Refugees

I suggest that the Stoic ideal of cosmopolitanism provides a clear answer to the question of our relationship with refugees. Since all refugees and all exiles are fellow citizens of our *cosmopolis*, reason demands that they be protected under the cosmic law. Our shared humanity makes them our neighbors. As our neighbors, we must share our community and its resources with them. Stoics believe that all human beings have a natural affinity with each other that grows from birth. This is their concept of *oikeiōsis* (see Pembroke; Blundell; Engberg-Pedersen; Inwood; and Reydam-Schils 2002, 2005). Our inborn sociability impels us to collaborate with others, live with others, and build strong networks of association and cooperation. The commonality of reason makes us all equal citizens of the world, equal cosmopolitans, sharing one state, one world, and governed by one common law. This common law is justice. Justice requires that we share our resources with those of our fellow citizens whose circumstances leave them in need.

The Stoics reason that a person in exile need not be regarded as suffering from an evil condition for us to recognize that he needs and deserves our help. On the Stoic view, a refugee is not a helpless alien whose misfortune has nothing to do with us. Rather, a refugee is our fellow citizen whose misfortune we have both the power and the duty to ameliorate. By coming to the aid of a fugitive fleeing the horrors of war, we promote our own good, act as good neighbors and good citizens, affirm our own humanity, and welcome that person back into the security of the *cosmopolis*. We preserve and promote the gods' cosmic law of justice.

A final point can be made about Stoic psychology. The motive of the Stoic cosmopolitan to help refugees and exiles is not pity. The Stoic recognizes that fortune is fickle. The peace, prosperity, health, and security we enjoy today can be ripped away from us tomorrow. No one anywhere is safe from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" (Shakespeare: Act 3, Scene 1; for classical Stoic consolations for exile in relation to exile in Shakespearean drama, see Kingsley-Smith: 112-13). All are subject to the vicissitudes of fate. So, the Stoic does not regard herself as superior to the person who needs help. But to pity another presupposes that the pitier believes that she is better off and higher than the one pitied. The pitier *stoops* to pity the pitiful person. Since the Stoic denies that she is above the exile or the beggar or the prisoner, this is one reason why the Stoic does not pity others.



A second reason is that the Stoic thinks it is unwise to take on the distress of a person who believes he is suffering true hardship. Seneca explains that the Stoic wise person will not feel pity, because pity is a feeling of suffering, and multiplying suffering is harmful, not helpful. Rather, “All the other things that those who feel pity want to do, the wise person will do gladly and with mind uplifted: he will bring succor to another’s tears, not join in them; he will give a hand to the shipwrecked, shelter to the exile, a coin to the needy” (*On Mercy* 2.6.2; Kaster and Nussbaum: 174). Thus, it is not shared misery that moves the Stoic to shelter the exile. It is recognition that justice, humanity, and reason demand that citizens of the world help each other. We all share the same home, after all.

In conclusion, I have argued that while the Roman Stoics did not regard exile as an evil, they also held that we ought to help those in exile, welcome them into our communities, share our resources with them, and respect them as our fellow cosmic citizens. The Roman Stoics regarded their own exiles as indifferent to their own happiness because they viewed them not as obstacles to a good life, but as opportunities to do good. To classify exile as an indifferent in Stoic ethics does not mean that those in exile are to be ignored, nor does it justify being indifferent to their situation. Rather, the Stoics believed that a person’s moral character, his virtue or vice, is displayed precisely in how he deals with exile, illness, pain, poverty, and death. And dealing with exile includes both one’s own exile and the exiles of others. The virtue of justice demands that the Stoic treat refugees and exiles well, since they are our fellow cosmic citizens. Therefore, from the Stoic perspective, Aeneas, his father, his son, and their few comrades who survived the sack of Troy became refugees by accident, but they, like us, are citizens of the world by birth. As such they and all refugees deserve refuge in our local communities. Stoics teach that we must make our home theirs.

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