

Stoic Naturalism, Rationalism, and Ecology

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Cheney's claim that there is a subtextual affinity between ancient Stoicism and deep ecology is historically unfounded, conceptually unsupported, and misguided from a scholarly viewpoint. His criticisms of Stoic thought are thus merely *ad hominem* diatribe. A proper examination of the central ideas of Stoic ethics reveals the coherence and insightfulness of Stoic naturalism and rationalism. While not providing the basis for a contemporary environmental ethic, Stoicism, nonetheless, contains some very fruitful ethical concepts.

Jim Cheney has claimed that there is a certain sensibility of alienation shared in the subtexts of ancient Stoicism and contemporary deep ecology.¹ My project here is to argue that a careful account of the central ideas of Stoic ethics admits no such affinity between Stoicism and deep ecology. To the contrary, I suggest that insofar as Stoicism is pervaded through and through by a strong *rationalism*, it bears a much closer parallel to the social ecology of Murray Bookchin. My criticism of Cheney is that by neglecting to carefully examine the relevant Stoic texts, he presents a skewed account of Stoicism built upon criticisms that are at best distorted and misleading half-truths. By purporting to use *subtextual analysis* as his tool, Cheney generates an interpretation of Stoicism as "alienating." However, since he misunderstands or simply ignores in his analysis the Stoic *doctrines themselves*, it degenerates into a regrettably diffuse, *ad hominem* diatribe. Although Cheney offers his interpretation as penetrating socio-political criticism, it is merely undisciplined narrative ill-equipped accurately to ascertain both the real shortcomings and the real merits of Stoic ethics and its ramifications for environmental thought.²

Stoic ethics can rightly be described as naturalistic in that the Stoic definition of the *summum bonum* is living *kata physin*, i.e., living in agreement with, or according to, nature. It is essential to bear in mind that the Stoic conception of

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¹ Jim Cheney, "The Neo-Stoicism of Radical Environmentalism," *Environmental Ethics* 11 (1989): 293-325. Cheney writes: ". . . there is a certain sensibility present in Stoicism, a theme which can be read there as a subtext when Stoicism is considered in the social and political context of its rise to prominence in the ancient world, and . . . this same sensibility can be read as a subtext in the deep ecological literature [of Warwick Fox, Bill Devall, George Sessions, and Arne Naess]" (p. 294).

² Cheney's use of Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963) as his sole source of what Stoicism is

nature, like the Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions, is teleological and *normative*. Epictetus' *Discourses*, Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* and moral essays, and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* are the best primary sources for detailed, extended discussion of the Stoic philosophy, especially Stoic moral philosophy. Diogenes Laertius and Cicero, both non-Stoics, are also useful as secondary sources on Stoicism. Consequently, these are the most appropriate texts to examine.

Epictetus states that "everything's evil is what is contrary to its own nature."³ Similarly, Seneca writes:

For man is a rational animal. Man's ideal state is realized when he has fulfilled the purpose for which he was born. And what is it that reason demands of him? Something very easy—that he live in accordance with his own nature.⁴

The concept of *physis* (nature) is quite rich in Stoicism, and a proper understanding of this concept takes us well along toward an understanding of Stoic philosophy. As Adolf Bonhöffer, the foremost scholar of Epictetus, has observed,⁵ *nature* can mean for the Stoics (1) kind, essence, sort (e.g., the nature of poverty, the nature of death); (2) the universe itself seen as an ordered whole (*kosmos*) determined by a principle of structure (*logos*) and law (*nomos*); (3) particular nature, the law of nature in the individual organism as it were localized and particularized (e.g., the nature of a horse,⁶ the nature of a tree); (4) human nature, which is actually only a special instance of particular nature, in so far as it is common to all specimens of *Homo sapiens*; (5) one's own specific, personal set of traits and characteristics as a unique human being (e.g., the nature of Epictetus as a lame ex-slave and gifted teacher who was intellectually convinced of and spiritually devoted to the wisdom of Stoicism).

Consequently, for the Stoics, to "live in accordance with nature" means to perceive and affirm the rational and *beneficial* arrangement of the universe and to seek to understand it through the systematic study of physics and logic. They recognize the rationality of every natural occurrence and all natural phenom-

about is questionable both with respect to the political context of Stoicism, and with respect to the content of Stoic philosophy. For the former, a good source is Andrew Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990). For the latter, see the accounts of such genuine scholars of Stoic philosophy as A. A. Long, Michael Frede, Gisela Striker, and Troels Engberg-Pedersen.

³ *Diatribae* IV.1.125; *Epictetus: The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments*, trans. W. A. Oldfather (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), vol. 2, p. 287.

⁴ *Epistulae Morales*, XLI, 8-9; *Seneca: Letters from a Stoic*, trans. Robin Campbell (London, England: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 88-89.

⁵ Adolf Bonhöffer, *Die Ethik des Stoikers Epictet* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1894), pp. 13-14, n. 11.

⁶ Cf. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* XLI, 6 and Epictetus, *Diatribae* III.1.1-9 and fragment 18.

ena, from the cycle of the seasons and the life-sustaining growth and fruition of trees and plants to the birth and development of human beings, the formation of family unions, and the establishment of human communities, society, and civilized social living. Reason is the trait which all normally developed adult human beings share in common and which provides the coherence of social communities. As a mammal, the human being acts in accordance with nature by eating when hungry, sleeping when tired, finding a mate and procreating when impelled by sexual desire, etc. As a rational organism, however, the human being acts in accordance with nature by acting according to *reason*.

For the Stoics, reason dictated that living rationally required that one live in accordance with virtue (*arete*), which they conceived of as “the natural perfection of a rational being *qua* rational.”⁷ According to Stoic ethics, virtue is the necessary and sufficient condition for happiness. In addition, it is construed as *consistency* (*homologia*), which literally means “harmony with reason.” As such, it is rational consistency (homology), and is a character of the soul’s “commanding-faculty” (*hegemonikon*). This *hegemonikon*, which governs the bodily functions of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, reproduction, and speech, is by its very nature rational. Unfortunately, vice is not only possible but ubiquitous. Vice is an aberrant state of unitary reason. Consequently, unlike the Plato of the *Republic* and Aristotle, the Stoics have a distinctively “monistic psychology.”⁸

The only real goods, they held, were the virtues of the soul: wisdom, moderation, courage, and justice. Each individual organism is naturally constituted so as to pursue its own good; human beings are no exception. Since the Stoic values the virtues of his⁹ soul above all else, he does not allow the suffering of others to disturb his tranquil confidence that his own virtue cannot be lost as long as he maintains his rational judgments about the nature of the world and its events. Thus, the Stoic does not judge the suffering of others to be evil, strictly speaking, since that would be to sacrifice his own good to no productive end. The only things that would be evil would be his *own* irrational, vicious judgments. Nevertheless, because the Stoic values his own virtue

⁷ Diogenes Laertius VII.94; *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), vol. 2, p. 201.

⁸ A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987), vol. 1, p. 383.

⁹ My use of the masculine pronoun is deliberate, but should not be misleading. All of the *ancient* Stoic authors conceived of the Stoic sage exclusively as a male. Consequently, they used only masculine articles, case endings, relative pronouns, etc. to refer to the Stoic sage. However, I see no reason whatsoever for *us* to think that the concept of the Stoic sage is at all gender specific, and thus gender exclusive. Thus, while I describe the roles of the Stoic here from a male perspective by using masculine pronouns, I do so simply in order to be consistent with the ancient sources. In no way am I suggesting that the correlative roles of a *female* Stoic (which I insert in the next paragraph) are excluded by the real content of the concept of the Stoic sage.

above all else, his virtue necessarily manifests itself in his interactions with others. Thus, it is rational for the Stoic to work to help others around him, use his material means to benefit them, exercise charity toward them, and participate as a member of whatever community he is in so as to improve that community. He does so for his own sake in order to promote his own good, i.e., his virtues. The rational organization of the universe reveals itself once again in the fact that *by* acting on behalf of his own welfare he thereby contributes to the public welfare at the same time.

Moreover, Stoics (male or female) must recognize, appreciate, and affirm their own personal, familial, social, and civic relations. They recognize as fathers (or mothers) that they should treat their children appropriately—that is, with fatherly (or motherly) kindness and care by raising them rationally, providing for their needs and serving as virtuous role models for them. Of course, they also have an instinctive bond of affection with their children,¹⁰ and it is eminently natural in the normative sense, and therefore rational, for them to express their love for them, for their wives or their husbands, and for their friends in the appropriate way. The Stoics recognize that they must fulfill both their “natural” relations (as sons/daughters, brothers/sisters, biological fathers/mothers) and “acquired” relations (as husbands/wives, adoptive fathers/mothers, appointed officials, etc.) in order to live consistently as upstanding members of their communities and preserve their own happiness. Their instinctive affectional impulses are strengthened and properly legitimized by the rationality of acting to benefit their fellow human beings. Thus, although Stoics are autonomous in that they follow the dictates of their own reason, reason is the principle of action that provides social cohesion and solidarity for all humanity, since it is shared by all human beings (actually by adults, potentially by children). On the other hand, because it is within their power, according to Epictetus, to train themselves always to retain their rational, virtuous judgments, they are masters of their own happiness, they possess *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency), and their mental freedom is safe from any external, worldly contingency.

In the context of this general summary of Stoic ethics, what specifically is the Stoic position on the natural environment and other animals? Epictetus is certainly representative of Stoicism in his orientation, and it couldn't be farther from the biocentrism and the anti-anthropocentrism of deep ecology, despite Cheney's claims to the contrary. To the extent that using the label of a *centrism* is helpful, the Stoics were decidedly, and most self-consciously, “logocentric.” Epictetus holds that animals are born to serve humans; they are not born for their own sake.¹¹

¹⁰ This parental love for one's own children is also the initial element of the social type of *oikeiosis*, as I discuss below.

¹¹ Epictetus, *Diatribae* I.16.

Each of the animals is constituted, one to be eaten, another to serve in farming, another to produce cheese, and yet another for some other similar use; to perform these functions what need have they to understand external impressions and to be able to differentiate between them? But god has brought the human being into the world to be a spectator of himself and of his works, and not merely a spectator, but also an interpreter. Wherefore, it is shameful for the human being to begin and end just where the irrational animals do; he should rather begin where they do, but end where nature has ended in dealing with us. Now she did not end until she reached contemplation and understanding and a manner of life harmonious with nature.¹²

Insofar as reason is what distinguishes human beings from the other animals, the Stoics hold that it is what is most characteristic of human nature; to be more precise, our highest virtue or ideal is found in our rational nature and our wisdom, not in our non-rational animality, and certainly not in our irrational judgments and impulses.

Furthermore, Stoic rationalism is not derived from any sort of mind-body dualism: "The Stoics are unmistakably physicalists; they claim that soul is body, a physical thing, and by a physical thing they uncompromisingly mean a three-dimensional solid object."¹³ This Stoic rationalism functions as an integral part of a very sophisticated, *naturalistic* theory of the development of organisms, a theory which turns upon the complex concept of *oikeiosis*. The term *oikeiosis* is notoriously difficult to translate: "appropriation,"¹⁴ "being well-disposed to,"¹⁵ "recognition and appreciation of something as belonging to one,"¹⁶ and even "familiarization"¹⁷ have been suggested. The opposite of *oikeiosis*, *allotriosis*, is easily translated as "alienation."

The Stoic theory of the development of organisms can be described as follows.¹⁸ *Oikeiosis* is the relationship that exists between an animal (whether nonhuman or human) and something else, such that there is an affinity between the two and a belief that the latter in some way *belongs* to the former. The first thing an animal has an *oikeiosis* to is itself. This relationship is the first form of *oikeiosis*: the pursuit of what is *oikeios* ("belonging") to ourselves. This form has been called "personal" *oikeiosis*, and is to be distinguished from

¹² Ibid., *Diatribae* I.6.18-21; Oldfather's translation, vol. 1, p. 45.

¹³ Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992), p. 37.

¹⁴ A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), vol. 1, p. 57.

¹⁵ S. G. Pembroke in "Oikeiosis," in *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A. A. Long (London: University of London, 1971), p. 116.

¹⁶ Gisela Striker in "The Role of *Oikeiosis* in Stoic Ethics," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1 (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 145.

¹⁷ Julia Annas in "The Hellenistic Version of Aristotle's Ethics," *Monist* 73, no. 1 (1990): 82.

¹⁸ In this explication of *oikeiosis* I am following Troels Engberg-Pedersen in his dense but provocative and often insightful book, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis: Moral Development and Social Interaction in Early Stoic Philosophy* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1990).

“social” *oikeiosis*, in which our pursuit of what belongs to us is directed toward other people.¹⁹ Because the animal *takes* itself to be *oikeion* to itself, it is (becomes) conscious of itself. Moreover, the very act of taking something to belong to itself has action-guiding force. Thus, as a result of this self-consciousness and taking itself to belong to itself, the animal has *love* of itself. It is this love of self that triggers the animal’s impulse to self-preservation. Self-preservation, in turn, leads the animal to pursue what belongs to it (*oikeia*) and what naturally accords with its constitution, and to avoid what is alien (typically because it is inimical) to it. In addition, consciousness of self may be said to *create* a proper self, an *I*, which constitutes an unchangeable viewpoint from which everything else is seen. Valuation itself is a function of things either being seen *from* that viewpoint as descriptively belonging to that self or being seen as alien to it.

But love of self, the feeling of affinity towards one’s self, is not the only innate feeling of affinity animals have. Animals also have an innate affinity to their offspring as soon as they are born. This affinity is the initial element in social *oikeiosis*. Parents, human and nonhuman, feel love for their children because parental love is part of their nature as social animals. This social form of *oikeiosis* is other-regarding: parental love for children is not explicable in terms of the parent’s self-preservation. Rather, the child is loved for his or her *own* sake. Thus, we are or should be concerned for others not just because the association is intrinsically desirable and beneficial to *ourselves*, but out of concern for *their* well-being.²⁰

In addition to being naturally social animals, however, human beings are especially distinguished by their *rational* capacity, which far exceeds that of “non-rational” animals. With the advent of reason, humans reflect on the self which they have been loving ever since infancy in a natural but *unreflective* way. For us, then,

. . . it is all a question of deciding what a human being *descriptively is*—and what therefore descriptively *belongs* to such a being. And in order to decide what a human being descriptively is (so the Stoics seem to have reasoned) we can do better than looking at him from the outside in the way we will necessarily have to do in the case of lower animals and plants. Rather, what a human being is is what he (veridically) sees himself as being. For “by nature” perception, including self-perception, is veridical (the fundamental epistemological tenet).²¹

¹⁹ Brad Inwood, “Comments on Professor Görgemann’s Paper: The Two Forms of *Oikeiosis* in Arius and the Stoa,” in *On Stoic and Peripatetic Ethics: The Work of Arius Didymus*, ed. W. W. Fortenbaugh (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1983), p. 193.

²⁰ Mary Whitlock Blundell, “Parental Nature and Stoic *Oikeiosis*,” *Ancient Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (1990): 222.

²¹ Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis*, p. 75.

Rational humans, like nonrational, nonhuman animals, act so as to preserve themselves out of love of self via personal *oikeiosis*. When they become parents, they also love their children, as we saw above, via social *oikeiosis*. However, the development of social *oikeiosis* does not stop with the love of one's own children for their own sake. The self that humans love once they mature into rational, reflective adults is a *rational* self. Thus, for adult humans, love of self becomes above all love of reason. At this stage, self-preservation is seen in a new, objective light. Adult humans act so as to preserve themselves because such action is *itself* orderly and harmonious *in the sense of being intelligible and justifiable*. Given the fact of self-love, action aimed at preserving one's self is rationally justifiable. Nevertheless, in recognizing this rational justification to preserve one's self, one comes to understand that this very same rational justification, in fact, applies to *all* individuals.

With this understanding, humans, as specifically *rational* animals, proceed from the strictly personal, animalistic stage of *oikeiosis*, which establishes self-preservation and the struggle to survive as *individuals* as their practical goal, beyond concern for and love of *their own* children, to the radically transformed conception of their selves as individuals that view themselves *both* subjectively, as animals impelled to seek their own survival and well-being, *and* objectively, as individual rational beings among many other rational adult beings, pre-rational children, and non-rational beings (nonhumans and mentally disabled humans).

As I explain below, this objective viewpoint allows one to see one's self as belonging to one and the same *moral* community of individuals who are one's fellow citizens. This explanation of the formation and cohesion of the human community, using the Stoic theory of social *oikeiosis*, certainly bears a striking parallel to the following explanation in Murray Bookchin's writing:

The social bond that human parents create with the young as the biocommunity phases into the social community is fundamental to the emergence of society and it is retained in every society as an active factor in the elaboration of history. It is not only that prolonged human immaturity develops the lasting ties so necessary for human interdependence. . . . It is also that care, sharing, participation, and complementarity develop this bond beyond the material division of labour, which has received so much emphasis in economic interpretations of social origins. This social bond gives rise to a fascinating elaboration of the tentative parent-offspring relationship: Love, friendship, responsibility, loyalty—not only to people but to *ideals* and *beliefs*, and hence makes belief, commitment and *civil* communities possible.²²

²² Murray Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990), pp. 119-20 (emphasis in the original).

The affinity between Stoic rationalism and the rationalism at work in Bookchin's social ecology is especially evident when one compares such passages as this one with a proper understanding of the Stoic doctrines.

With the development of reason and the new self-consciousness that accompanies it in human beings, what one takes one's self to be is profoundly transformed. The previous purely subjective viewpoint, in which one's own self is all that "belongs" to one's self, is joined and subordinated by the objective, reflective viewpoint from which one can see one's self from the outside, as it were. Thus, the development of reason affects the identification of one's self as a self-conscious, reflective, rational being. Reason's goal, however, is nothing less than to accurately reflect or "mirror" the whole universe in one's understanding. Thus:

. . . on the Stoic theory human understanding is fundamentally veridical, i.e., in accordance with the nature of things, and this claim is in its turn an expression of the fundamental naturalism of Stoic philosophy according to which human beings, and their cognitive faculties, are essentially "parts of the whole" of nature: they are natural beings that are just as much a part of nature, taken as an overarching whole, as any other kind of natural being (though they are also superior to them²³) and they have cognitive faculties the essence of which is to grasp and understand the whole as it is.²⁴

It is reflection at this higher level that gives one an understanding of the concept of rational justifiability and of the system of self-preserving behavior based on self-love that is operating in animals in general. This reflection also gives one both an understanding of the unimportance of any given individual, in any rational answer to the practical question of what one should do, and an understanding of the objective character of reason, directed as it is toward *the discovery of truth*. According to Engberg-Pedersen, grasping these points

. . . will entail accepting them as guidelines for any further practical inquiry one may have to engage in. One will therefore accept *giving up* any subjective point of view which would be based either on an incapacity for self-objectivization or on an incapacity to include all relevant considerations in one's deliberation about what to do. Conversely one will *embrace* the requirement to act in a way that is rationally justifiable and in accordance with the system of self-preserving behaviour based on self-love, the objective status of which one has come to recognize.²⁵

When we turn again to Bookchin's thought, we find another surprising echo of Stoic ideas. Bookchin stresses the importance of the development of

²³ Deep ecologists certainly want to deny this claim.

²⁴ Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis*, p. 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94 (emphasis in the original).

rational subjectivity in the self-realization of nature in human beings (in the second sense above). Bookchin is explicitly attacking “David Foreman of ‘Earth First!’, an avowed acolyte of ‘deep ecology,’”²⁶ when he argues that

We are grimly in need of a “re-enchantment of humanity”—not only of the world—by a fluid, organismic, and dialectical rationality. For it is in this very *human* rationality that nature ultimately actualized its own evolution of subjectivity over long aeons of neural and sensory development. *There is nothing more natural than humanity’s capacity to conceptualize, generalize, relate ideas, and engage in symbolic communication.* For “biocentric,” and “anti-humanist,” and “natural law” advocates to set their faces against the self-realization of nature in an ecologically oriented humanity and dialectical thought is to foster the image of a “fallen nature.” No less than Adam and Eve’s acquisition of knowledge, humanity’s power of thought becomes its abiding “original sin.”²⁷

While it is undoubtedly true that the Stoics had no conception of *dialectical* rationality comparable to Bookchin’s, nevertheless, the fundamental idea that it is reason that is quintessentially human, *and* that reason is vital to the natural fulfillment of humanity, is an idea shared both by Stoicism and social ecology, but conspicuously *absent* in deep ecology.

Given the Stoics’ account of valuation described above, it should be no surprise that they denied the “inherent value” of things—that is, the value a flower or a tree or a whole species of flower or a whole species of tree has in itself (or with respect to an ecosystem) *independent* of a valuer. The Stoics held that human beings may, of course, err in their value judgments, but “[i]t is *because* human beings (and animals too) see certain things as valuable that these things are valuable.”²⁸ Thus, inasmuch as deep ecologists *do* maintain the “inherent value” of things, the Stoics are manifestly in explicit *disagreement* with them. Consequently, on the basis of this tenet, which appears to be absolutely central to deep ecology, Cheney is clearly mistaken in suggesting that there is any “Neo-Stoicism” in deep ecology.

Perhaps the most revolutionary and original idea in Stoicism from the perspective of the history of moral philosophy is cosmopolitanism: the community of all human beings as members and fellow-citizens of the same, single *cosmos*. Plutarch reports that

. . . the much admired *Republic* of Zeno, the founder of the Stoa, may be summed up in this one main point, that we should not live in our world based on either cities or communities, each one differentiated by its own principles of justice, but that we should regard all human beings as members of the same community and fellow-

²⁶ Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, p. 159.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-61 (emphasis in the original).

²⁸ Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis*, p. 40.

citizens, and that there should be one life and order, like that of a herd that feeds together nurtured by a common law.²⁹

Stephen R. L. Clark quotes this passage³⁰ to show the contrast between how we human beings do, in fact, descriptively feel as a rule—our natural loyalties and affections being directed to those of our own immediate flock—and the ethical injunction of universal humanism, which is a moral prescription to stretch our sympathies and broaden the moral community of concern to embrace all members of humanity.³¹ Seneca draws this same contrast:

Let us grasp the fact that there are two communities—the one, which is great and truly common, which embraces gods and human beings, in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our citizenship by the sun; the other, the one to which we have been assigned by the condition of our birth.³²

Although the quotation from Zeno could leave open the interpretation of Stoic cosmopolitanism as baldly speciesist, since it circumscribes the moral community so as to include all and only *human* beings, Seneca describes the world community in such a way that it includes the gods as well as all human beings.

But why should the gods be included in the moral community? What do they have in common with merely mortal humans? The answer to this question can be found in Epictetus. Epictetus explains that what joins human beings together with the society of god (or gods) is rationality:

Well, then, anyone who has attentively studied the administration of the universe and has learned that “the greatest and most authoritative and most comprehensive of all governments is this one, which is composed of humans and god, and that from the latter have descended the seeds of being, not merely to my father or to my grandfather, but to all things that are begotten and that grow upon earth, and chiefly to rational beings, seeing that by nature it is theirs alone to have communion in the society of god, being intertwined with him through reason,”—why should such a person not call himself a citizen of the universe?³³

As we see once again, Stoic naturalism engenders Stoic rationalism. It is reason and not species membership in *Homo sapiens* that binds together members of the moral community. Moreover, this point ties back into my account of *oikeiosis*, since the *telos*, the good for human beings, is living in homology with nature, which means “living in such a way as to express in one’s acts a complete

²⁹ Plutarch, *De Alexandri Fortuna aut Virtute*, 329ab (my translation).

³⁰ S. R. L. Clark, “The Rights of Wild Things,” *Inquiry* 22 (1979): 182.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Seneca, *De Otio*, IV.1 (my translation).

³³ Epictetus, *Diatribae* I.9.4-6; Oldfather’s translation, vol. 1, p. 65 (slightly revised).

and unchangeable, correct grasp of what belongs to a man in all the situations in which he finds himself."³⁴

We may speculate that if this logocentrism were carried out consistently, it would presumably *exclude* human beings who are permanently mentally disabled to such a degree that they are not even minimally rational, e.g., anencephalic neonates, victims of irreversible brain damage, elderly people suffering from advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease. Moreover, logocentrism would also presumably *include* nonhuman animals who possess minimal rationality, e.g., normal, healthy, adult chimpanzees, gorillas, dolphins, porpoises, and other such mammals. Thus, the logocentrism of Stoicism could provide a hierarchy of moral considerability with fully rational beings (persons) at the top level and gradually descending levels of less rational beings on down the scale. Notice that this logocentrism is neither speciesist, favoring all and only human beings over all nonhumans, nor biocentrically egalitarian, judging an AIDS virus or microbe to have intrinsic value equal to a rational being.³⁵

By elucidating some of the principal ideas of Stoic philosophy, I tried to show that deep ecology has really nothing at all in common with ancient Stoicism. The Stoics of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods could hardly have been motivated by the same circumstances and problems that motivate deep ecologists. Moreover, it is all too evident that the *content* of Stoic ethics and the *content* of deep ecology are radically dissimilar. Any attempt to link the two, either textually or subtextually, is certainly misguided from the viewpoint of the history of philosophy and the history of ideas.

To conclude, it seems appropriate to juxtapose a quotation from each of the two *contemporary* philosophers, Jim Cheney and Murray Bookchin. In denouncing Ecosophy S and alleging its subtextual affinity with Stoicism, Cheney writes:

It may seem as though we are listening to the coyote when we hear her through the self which has emphatically incorporated a vision of the coyote-in-the-ecosystem, but we do not hear her; we hear our own isolation and longing for wholeness and connectedness with that which we have shut out and are willing to readmit only on the condition that it conform to a unity, a logos, of our own making. It matters little that the unity includes the coyote, for it includes her only as a "logosized" coyote.³⁶

Bookchin voices the sober rationalism and clarity of thought characteristic of

³⁴ Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis*, p. 80.

³⁵ Some deep ecologists appear at times to be committed to this biocentric egalitarianism, while others at times seem to advocate an ecocentric egalitarianism, according to which an individual human being has the same intrinsic value as a stream or a hill.

³⁶ Cheney, "The Neo-Stoicism of Radical Environmentalism," p. 324.

Stoicism in responding to the anti-logocentric eco-multivocality found in Cheney:

Ecology is based on the wondrous qualities, fecundity, and creativity of natural evolution, all of which warrant our deepest emotional, aesthetic, and, yes, intellectual appreciation—not on anthropomorphically projected deities, be they “immanent” or “transcendental.” Nothing is gained by going beyond a naturalistic, truly ecological, framework and indulging mystical fantasies that are regressive psychologically and atavistic historically. Nor will ecological creativity be served by dropping on all fours and baying at the moon like coyotes or wolves.³⁷

Following Bookchin, what is needed is not conceptually incoherent, jargon-laden, and diffuse diatribe, but rather a natural, i.e., *rational*, social ecology sensitive to the unique capacities and unique responsibilities of human beings. Following Stoicism, the natural, the rational, and the virtuous are one in the human being. Thus, it is both self-contradictory and misanthropic to denounce *logos*, reason, since in doing so we denounce our common human nature and thereby the very foundation of our social and moral community. After all, from what other than reason can a sound and viable environmental ethic be constructed? To try to “logosize” coyotes is doubtless just as ridiculous as to try to “de-logosize” ourselves.

³⁷ Murray Bookchin, *Remaking Society* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989), p. 71.