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Handout for Seneca Paper

I. Zeno's Manual Simile

For Zeno¹—and Antiochus²—denies that you know a thing! ‘In that way?’ you will ask, ‘for we defend that even one who is not wise understands quite a lot. But you all deny that anyone knows a thing unless he is wise.’ And indeed Zeno would settle this with a gesture. For, when he had extended out his hand, fingers splayed, would say, ‘a **presentation** is like this.’ Then, when he’d drawn in the fingers a bit, ‘**assent**, like this.’ And when he’d pressed tightly and made a fist, would say that that was **understanding**. From that visual tool he named that thing **katalêpsis**, that had not been [named] before. However, when he’d moved his left hand and grasped his fist **tightly** and **vigorously**, would call that a kind of **knowledge**, the master of which were no one, unless wise—but who this *sage* may be, or may have been, they themselves indeed are not wont to say.

SVF 1.66, Cicero *Academica* 2.144-5

Negat enim vos Zeno — negat Antiochus scire quicquam. ‘Quo modo?’ inquires; ‘nos enim defendimus etiam insipientem multa comprehendere. At scire negatis quemquam rem ullam nisi sapientem;’ et hoc quidem Zeno gestu conficiebat. Nam, cum extensis digitis adversam manum ostenderat, ‘**visum**’ inquebat ‘huius modi est.’ Deinde, cum paulum digitos contraxerat, ‘**assensus**’ huius modi.’ Tum cum plane compresserat pugnumque fecerat, **comprehensionem** illam esse dicebat: qua ex similitudine etiam nomen ei rei, quod ante non fuerat, *κατάληψιν* imposuit. Cum autem laevam manum admoverat et illum pugnum arte **vehementerque** compresserat **scientiam** talem esse dicebat, cuius compotem nisi sapientem esse neminem—sed qui sapiens sit aut fuerit ne ipsi quidem solent dicere.³

2. Terms to Know

Knowledge:

Latin: *visum/species* > *assensus* > *comprehensio* > *scientia*
Greek: *phantasia* > *sunkatathesis* > *katalêpsis* > *epistêmê*⁴
> *krisis*

Other Terms:

Latin: *motus* > *impetus* > *affectus*
Greek: *propatheia* > *hormê* > *pathos*
Kinds of Stoics: *progreiciens* > *sapiens*

¹ the founder of Stoicism

² —of Ascalon, one of the Academics, and a teacher of Cicero

³ see Sandbach 1971: 11, and his chapter on *Phantasia Katalēptike* for a discussion on ‘assent’

⁴ *SVF* 1.67-8

3. Epicurean Mentions

Ep. 2.5-6 – as a scout, not a deserter

Ep. 4.10 – picking from another’s garden

Ep. 9 – in defence of friendship

Ep. 18.9-10 – in defence of Epicurus’ pleasure

Ep. 21.9 – contra Cyrenaicos

Ep. 9.17

Just as loneliness is hated, and fellowship is **strongly desired** for, Nature befriends one man to another, thus there too is in this matter a goad, which makes us **desirous** of friendships.

Quomodo solitudinis² odium est et **appetitio** societatis, quomodo hominem homini natura conciliat, sic inest huic quoque rei stimulus, qui nos amicitiarum **appetentes** faciat.⁵

Ep. 12.11

You will say, ‘Epicurus said [that]. What is your interest in **what belongs to another?**’ What is true, is mine. I shall continually heap Epicurus on you, so that they, who swear by words, but do not esteem what is said, but by whom, that they may know that those things are best, that are common to all. Goodbye.

“Epicurus,” inquis, “dixit. Quid tibi cum **alieno?**” Quod verum est, meum est. Perseverabo Epicurum tibi ingerere, ut isti, qui in verba iurant, nec quid dicatur aestimant, sed a quo, sciant, quae optima sunt, esse communia. Vale.

Ep. 16.7

You have no reason to marvel at my mind; thus far I am prodigal with another’s wealth. Why have I said something that belongs to another? Whatever has been well-said by another is mine. Epicurus also expressed that: ‘if you will live according to Nature, never will you be poor; if according to opinions, never will you be rich.’

Non est quod mireris animum meum: adhuc de alieno liberalis sum. Quare autem alienum dixi? quidquid bene dictum est ab ullo meum est. Istuc quoque ab Epicuro dictum est: ‘si **ad naturam** vives, numquam eris pauper; si ad opiniones, numquam eris dives’.

Ep. 33.2-4 – utterances of Epicurus as public property (*publicae*)

Ep. 33.4

Consider that we wish to distinguish *sententiae* individually from the mass of such; to whom shall we assign them? To Zeno, or Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Panaetius, or Posidonius? **We are not under a king; each claims himself for himself.**⁶

⁵ interestingly, as well, Cicero, Acad. 2.8.24 says, using the Loeb translation for simplicity, defines *appetitio* by the greek *hormē*, ‘This other point moreover is manifest: there must be a first principle established for wisdom to follow when she embarks on any action, and this first principle must be consistent with nature; for otherwise appetition (our chosen equivalent for the term *hormē*), by which we are impelled to action and seek to get an object presented to our vision, cannot be set in motion...’

⁶ this recalls Seneca’s admonition to Lucilius in *Ep.* 1, *vindica te tibi*

Put a nos velle singulares sententias ex turba separare; cui illas adsignabimus? Zenoni an Cleanthi an Chrysippo an Panaetio an Posidonio? ***Non sumus sub rege; sibi quisque se vindicat.***

De Otio 3.1

I will show you that the Stoics also hold this view – not because I have bound myself to undertake nothing in opposition to the dictates of Zeno or Chrysippus, but rather just because the facts of the matter *permit* me to support their opinion. For if one always adheres to the opinion of some one person, he is a partisan rather than a senator.

Hoc Stoicis quoque placere ostendam, non quia mihi legem dixerim nihil contra dictum Zenonis Chrysippive committere, sed quia res ipsa patitur me ire in illorum sententiam, quoniam si quis semper unius sequitur, non in curia sed in factione est.

Vita Beata 3.2-3

Not to bore you, however, with tortuous details, I shall pass over in silence the opinions of other philosophers, for it would be tedious to enumerate and refute them all. Do listen to ours. But when I say “ours,” I do not bind myself to some particular one of the Stoic masters; I, too, have the right to form an opinion. Accordingly, I shall follow so-and-so, I shall request so-and-so to divide the question; perhaps, too, when called upon after all the rest, I shall impugn none of my predecessors’ opinions, and shall say: “I simply have this much to add.” Meantime, I follow the guidance of Nature—a doctrine upon which all Stoics are agreed. Not to stray from Nature and to mould ourselves according to her law and pattern—this is true wisdom.⁷

Sed ne te per circumitus traham, aliorum quidem opiniones praeteribo—nam et enumerare illas longum est et coarguere. Nostram accipe. Nostram autem cum dico, non alligo me ad unum aliquem ex Stoicis proceribus; est et mihi censendi ius. Itaque aliquem sequar, aliquem iubebo sententiam dividere, fortasse et post omnes citatus nihil improbabo ex iis, quae priores decreverint, et dicam: “Hoc amplius censeo.”³ Interim, quod inter omnis Stoicos convenit, rerum naturae adsentior; ab illa non deerrare et ad illius legem exemplumque formari sapientia est.

Ep. 21.9

What usually happens in the Senate, I think should also be done in Philosophy: when someone has made a motion, from which part pleases me, I ask him to divide his opinion and, I vote for what I approve.

Quod fieri in senatu solet, faciendum ego in philosophia quoque existimo: cum censuit aliquis, quod ex parte mihi placeat, iubeo illum dividere sententiam et sequor, quod probo.

4. Ciceronian Probability

Tusc. 1.55ff. – Socrates and Plato, Soul and Recollection

Tusc. 3.13-14 – Stoic *compendia*

Tusc. 3.28, 31 – per Cyrenaicos, anticipation of, preparation for, possible misfortune

⁷ using the Loeb Classical Library translation

Tusc. 3.51

But with these men, another time, and indeed with the same intent, that I should begin no contest, I will yield to them, if they speak truly.

Sed cum istis alias, et eo quidem animo, nullum ut certamen instituum, verum dicentibus facile cedam.

Tusc. 2.5

They bear it with impatience, who, as if sacrificed and consecrated to certain sure and fixed opinions, are bound by that necessity, that they are compelled to defend, for consistency's sake those things, which they do not usually approve. We, who follow **what is probable**, cannot go beyond what reaches verisimilitude, and are ready to refute without obstinacy and to be refuted without anger.

Quod ii ferunt animo iniquo, qui certis quibusdam destinatisque sententiis quasi addicti et consecrati sunt eaque necessitate constricti, ut, etiam quae non probare soleant, ea cogantur constantiae causa defendere: nos, qui sequimur **probabilia** nec ultra quam ad id, quod veri simile occurrit, progredi possumus, et refellere sine pertinacia et refelli sine iracundia parati sumus

Tusc. 4.47 – ibid.

Tusc. 4.7 – freedom of conscience, free of partisanship, whatever is probable

5. Cicero and Seneca – Intertext?

De Tranquillitate Animi 2.8

Tunc illos et paenitentia coepta tenet et incipiendi timor, subrepsitque illa animi iactatio non inuenientis exitum, quia nec **imperare** cupiditatibus suis nec **obsequi** possunt, et cunctatio uitae parum se explicantis et inter destituta uota torpentis animi situs.

Then regret for what they have begun lays hold upon them, and the fear of beginning again, and then creeps in the agitation of a mind which can find no issue, because they can neither rule nor obey their desires, and the hesitancy of a life which fails to find its way clear, and then the dullness of a soul that lies torpid amid abandoned hopes.

Ep. 116.1 Compare with Cicero, De Re Publica 3.37

Nam cum tibi cupere interdixero, velle permittam, ut eadem illa intrepidus facias, ut certiore consilio, ut voluptates ipsas magis sentias; quidni ad te magis peruenturae sint, **si illis imperabis, quam si servies?**

De Re Publica 3.37

...Do we not observe that dominion has been granted by Nature to everything that is best, to the great advantage of what is weak? For why else does **God rule over man**, the **mind over the body**, and **reason over lust and anger and the other evil elements of the mind?** . . .

...But we must distinguish different kinds of **commanding** and **servicing**. For the mind is said to rule over the body, and also over lust; but it rules over the body as a king governs his subjects, or a father his children, whereas it rules over lust as a master rules his slaves, restraining it and breaking its power. So kings, commanders, magistrates, senators, and popular assemblies govern citizens as the mind governs the body; but the **master's restraint of his slaves** is like the restraint exercised by **the best part of the mind, the reason, over its own evil and weak elements, such as the lustful desires, anger, and the other disquieting emotions**. . . .

...An non cernimus optimo cuique dominatum ab ipsa natura cum summa utilitate infirmorum datum? Cur igitur **deus homini, animus imperat corpori, ratio libidini iracundiaeque et ceteris vitiosis eiusdem animi partibus?**

...Sed et **imperandi** et **serviendi** sunt dissimilitudines cognoscendae. Nam ut animus corpori dicitur imperare, dicitur etiam libidini, sed corpori ut rex civibus suis aut parens liberis, libidini autem ut servis dominus, quod eam coercet et frangit, sic regum, sic imperatorum, sic magistratum, sic patrum, sic populorum imperia civibus sociisque praesunt ut corporibus animus, **domini autem servos ita fatigant, ut optima pars animi, id est sapientia, eiusdem animi vitiosas imbecillasque partes, ut libidines, ut iracundias, ut perturbationes ceteras...**

6. Seneca and Posidonius

Ep. 78.28; 83.10; 87.31, 35, 38; 88.21; 90.5, 7, 11, 13, 20, 30, 31; 92.10; 94.38; 95.65; 104.22; 108.38; 113.27-8; 121.1

Natural Questions, 1.5.10, 13; 2.26.4, 7; 2.54.1; 4b.3.2; 6.17.3; 6.21.2; 6.24.6; 7.20.2, 4

7. Structure of Affectus, Voluntas an Impetus, *De Ira*

2.3.5 species injuriae > agitatio animi > motus > impetus

an impetus (i) accepit speciem injuriae
(ii) approbat

concitatio animi ad ultionem voluntate et iudicio pergentis
can anything be sought or avoided, *sine assensu mentis?*

2.4.1 primus motus = non voluntarius = praeparatio affectus
alter [sc. motus] = cum voluntate non contumaci
= vengeance is right, b/c of my injury
= punishment is right, b/c of the criminal
tertius motus = impotens
= past the decision stage
qui non vult, si oportet ulcisci
sed utique
= **qui rationem evicit**

2.4.2 impossible to avoid the first shock, like bodily affects,
though practice (*consuetudo*) and constant watchfulness (*assidua observatio*) can
perhaps weaken them

Ep. 37.4

You will show me no one, who knows how he has come to intend what he does; he has not been led by **forethought**, but driven along by **impulse**. Fortune has no less often attacked us, than we her. It is shameful not to walk, but to be carried off, and suddenly, in the midst of a whirlwind of affairs, stunned, to ask, 'How did I get here?'

Neminem mihi dabis, qui sciat, quomodo quod vult, coeperit velle; non **consilio** adductus illo, sed **impetu** impactus est. Non minus saepe fortuna in nos incurrit quam nos in illam. Turpe est non ire, sed ferri et subito in medio turbine rerum stupentem quaerere: "Huc ego quemadmodum veni?"

De Ira 1.8.1-3

It is best, **to spurn** the first incitement of anger straightaway and **to fight off** the same seeds [of it] and to take care, **lest we fall** into anger.⁸ For if it starts to carry us away, the return to health is difficult, since reason is useless, when once *affectus has been led in*, and by our own intent given some jurisdiction; about the rest, it will do as much as it wants, not so much as you allow.

I say that in the first place the enemy should be warded off at the borders; for when it has entered and borne itself to the gates, it does not accept a delegation from the captives. Nor is the mind set apart, watching the passions from without, not suffering them to advance further than they ought, but **is itself changed unto passion** and therefore cannot recall that useful and healthful strength, now **betrayed** and **weakened**.

For, as I said, they do not have their own **separate locations**, and **apart**, but passion and reason are, for better and worse, a change of the soul. How therefore shall reason, **occupied** and **weighed down by** the **vices**, arise, which **has yielded** to anger? Or shall it somehow free itself **from confusion** in which a **mixture of worse things** has prevailed?

Optimum est primum irritamentum irae protinus **spernere** ipsisque **repugnare** seminibus et dare operam, ne **incidamus** in iram. Nam si coepit ferre transversos, difficilis ad salutem recursus est, quoniam nihil rationis est, ubi semel adfectus **inductus est** iusque illi aliquod voluntate nostra datum est; faciet de cetero quantum volet, non quantum permiseris.

In primis, inquam, finibus hostis arcendus est; nam cum intravit et portis se intulit, modum a captivis non accipit. Neque enim sepositus est animus et extrinsecus speculatur adfectus, ut illos non patiatul ultra quam oportet procedere, sed **in affectum ipse mutatur**⁹ ideoque non potest utilem illam vim et salutarem **proditam** iam **infirmatam**que revocare.

Non enim, ut dixi, **separatas** ista **sedes** suas **diductas**que habent,¹⁰ sed affectus et ratio **in melius peius**que mutatio animi est. Quomodo ergo ratio **occupata** et **oppressa vitiis** resurget, quae irae **cessit**? Aut quemadmodum **ex confusione** se liberabit, in qua **peiorum mixtura** praevaluit?

finis *Ep.* 92

⁸ note in + acc., do we literally turn into anger? That would be a preposterous idea

⁹ cf. *Ep.* 90.6, *Sed postquam subrepentibus vitiis in tyrannidem regna conversa sunt, opus esse legibus coepit*

¹⁰ cf. *Ep.* 41.8, Reason in the soul, not that reason *is* the soul

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