MARCUS AURELIUS

*Meditations,
Books 1–6*

Translated with an Introduction
and Commentary by
CHRISTOPHER GILL

OXFORD

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MEDITATIONS

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For my colleagues and students
at Aberystwyth and Exeter

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PREFACE

This book provides a new translation and commentary on the first half of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, together with a full introduction on the *Meditations* as a whole. Apart from Hadot's commentary on Book 1, this is, I believe, the first commentary on an extended part of the *Meditations* since Farquharson's two-volume study of 1944. As in other volumes in the series, discussion of part of a text offers a bridge towards understanding the entire work. The main focus in the introduction and commentary is on the philosophical content, especially the question how and how far the *Meditations* relates to Stoic theory in general. The volume is also designed to bring out the distinctive style and mode of reflection in the work and what seems to be its principal function, to help Marcus to take forward a life-long project of ethical self-improvement. This project has a special interest in the modern context, in the light of current concern with personal development and pathways to happiness.

This volume joins earlier books in the series on Seneca and Epictetus in presenting versions of what we can describe as 'practical ethics' in the Roman imperial period. The appearance of these three volumes marks a greater willingness on the part of scholars to take such writings seriously as philosophy and to explore their characteristic idiom and line of thought. This book, like others in the series, builds on recent intensive academic work on Hellenistic and Roman philosophy, including studies of the *Meditations*. From my own standpoint, the book continues my examination of ethics and psychology, including the therapy of emotions, in Hellenistic and Roman thought, especially Stoicism. The focus here is on a single—intriguing and suggestive—text. In future work, I plan to reflect in broader terms on the significance of Stoicism for modern thought about ethics and the interface of ethics with psychology and the study of nature, as well as on the possible uses of Stoic practical ethics for modern purposes.

The completion of this book was made possible by a semester's research study leave provided by the University of Exeter, along with a nine-month Fellowship funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council; this support has been invaluable and is much appreciated.

I would like to thank, very strongly, the general editors, Jonathan Barnes and Tony Long, for agreeing to include this work in the series, and for their acute and detailed comments on all parts of the volume. I am grateful also

to Marcel van Ackeren for his perceptive observations on the introduction and for the stimulus offered in various ways by his own recent work on the *Meditations*. Of course, all the remaining errors of fact and judgement in this book are my responsibility. I would also like to thank Peter Momtchiloff for his support and all the staff of Oxford University Press involved in the preparation of the book for their characteristically careful and helpful work. I am very grateful to Petra Bielecki for her help towards compiling the Index Locorum.

The book also builds on my previous work on the *Meditations*, including providing the introduction and notes for a complete new translation by Robin Hard, prepared originally for Wordsworth Classics and subsequently revised for Oxford World's Classics. Collaboration with Robin on these and related volumes has always been both congenial and instructive. I have also gained from helpful comments by other scholars on several papers on Marcus. These were given at a 2004 conference on Greek and Roman philosophy (100 BC–200 AD) at the Institute of Classical Studies in London University; a 2006 colloquium on Platonism and Stoicism at Gargnano organized by the University of Milan; a 2007 conference on *Meditations* at Cambridge University; and a 2009 conference on Marcus Aurelius (the first ever, as far as we know) at the University of Cologne. Three of these papers are cited in the Bibliography as Gill 2007a and 2007b and 2012b.

During a career in university teaching spanning more than forty years (mostly at Aberystwyth and Exeter), I have been fortunate in being able to teach regularly Hellenistic and Roman philosophy, including the *Meditations*. I have benefited greatly from the responses and insights of my students, and also, more broadly, from those of my colleagues, in discussions and seminar-papers, especially at Exeter. In a more intangible, but more important, way, I have also benefited from the companionship and support of colleagues and sometimes students who have become good friends. This volume is dedicated to them with great warmth.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

The abbreviations for other ancient authors and works are normally those used by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th edn.) (Oxford, 1940) (LSJ), or P. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1982) (*OLD*). Authors and texts cited by abbreviation are given in full form in the Index Locorum. All secondary works cited by author and date are included in the Bibliography. All references not otherwise identified are to the *Meditations*, referring to the books, chapters, and divisions of chapters in the edition of Book 1 by Hadot and Luna (1998) and in the remaining books to the edition of the whole *Meditations* by Dalfen (1987). In the Commentary, these references are given in bold. All translations of the *Meditations* given in the Introduction and Commentary are mine. All dates are AD unless otherwise indicated. Internal references are normally given in the form: 'see Introd., text to nn. 21–2' (referring to the main Introduction); 'see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 3–4' (referring to the separate Introduction to Book 1); and 'see Comm. on 1.4' (referring to the Commentary on Book 1, Chapter 4 of the *Meditations*). References to the Commentary may also take the form 'see main note on 1.16' or 'see note on 1.16.3', identifying relevant parts of the Commentary.

In citing evidence for Hellenistic philosophy, especially Stoicism, and (less frequently) the Presocratic philosophers, I generally refer only to the numbers in LS or DK. Referring to LS passages has the advantage that it enables readers to study the passage alongside other evidence for the relevant theory, and to do so in conjunction with the LS commentary. However, in the case of more important or controversial evidence, I cite also the primary source.

Commonly used abbreviations in this book (not found in LSJ or *OLD*) are as follows:

DK	Diels, H., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. W. Kranz, 3 vols. 6th edn. (Zurich, 1951–2)
Epicur. *K. D.*	Epicurus, *Kuriai Doxai*
Epict. *Diss.*	Epictetus, *Dissertationes*
HA	*Historia Augusta*, with the relevant life identified, e.g. *Vita Marci*.

LS	A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987); references are normally to sections and passages.
Plu. *Comm Not.*	Plutarch, *De Communibus Notitiis adversus Colotem*
Sen. *Ira*	Seneca, *De Ira*
Sen. *Tranq.*	Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*
Stob.	C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense (eds.), *Ioannis Stobaei: Anthologium* (Berlin, 1884–1912, reprinted 1958).
SVF	H. von Arnim (ed.), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1903–5, reprinted Munich 2004).

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius is an exceptional philosophical work, by ancient—or any other—standards. It is a reflective notebook by a Roman emperor, apparently written for his own private use in the last twelve years of his life when he was campaigning in Germany. Apart from Book 1, there is no clear organization or system but rather a series of loosely connected, short observations. Although the main underlying influence is, evidently, Stoicism, the work is non-technical and distinctive in style and seems at some points out of line with Stoic theory.

What can philosophically minded scholars and students (the main target audience of this volume) hope to learn from a work of this kind? It would be unrealistic to expect sustained or authoritative analysis of specific aspects of Stoic doctrines. What we find are repeated attempts to encapsulate, in a few, highly charged sentences, the broad vision of human life and its larger cosmic setting offered by Stoicism. Above all, the work communicates with remarkable power what it means to try to live one's life—sincerely and urgently—according to Stoic principles. At the heart of the *Meditations*, I think, is an idea central to Stoic ethics, though not perhaps unique to Stoicism. The key thought is that, over and above the biological or physical and purely external or formal dimensions of our existence, we should aim to shape our lives as the expression of an ongoing journey towards an ideal state of character, understanding, and mode of interpersonal relationship, which should constitute our target even though we will never achieve it fully. In the light of this larger project, Marcus addresses challenges of which he is especially conscious but which are also universal human concerns. These are, above all, facing the looming presence of our own death, and recognizing the significance of our communal roles and personal relationships in spite of our shared mortality and transience. Marcus also addresses in his own distinctive way broader topics in the interface between ethics and logic or the study of nature that were crucial for Stoicism. He looks for reassurance, despite some uncertainties, that the capacities of human psychology and the nature of the universe support the kind of ethical vision that Stoicism offers. Understood in this way, the *Meditations*

can be seen as a genuinely philosophical text, on some accounts of 'philosophy' at least, and the work can have its own special resonance for modern readers as it has done for preceding generations.[1]

This introduction discusses the *Meditations* as a whole, although the translation and commentary deal only with the first half of the work, Books 1–6. The introduction is a rather full one, in comparison with other volumes in this series. Marcus' work, with its short and seemingly disconnected passages (which we call 'chapters') and its rather elusive doctrinal position, benefits from a broader interpretative discussion to provide a context for the commentary, which is focused on the individual chapters. I begin by outlining the main formal features and what seems to be the overall function of the *Meditations*. Next, I consider how far we can identify a single intellectual or ethical project or programme underlying Marcus' mosaic of brief, sometimes oracular or even fragmentary, reflections. I do so partly by considering some recent scholarly approaches to this question and partly by outlining four main strands in the framework of thinking expressed in the work, which are examined later in this introduction. The first and most important strand is Marcus' ethical outlook, above all his core project in the *Meditations*, that of living one's life as an ongoing journey of self-improvement. Marcus' understanding of this project depends on a complex of Stoic ideas about development, society and politics, and emotions. A second important strand in the work is Marcus' recurrent preoccupation with human death and transience, especially his own. Although this theme is often considered by scholars on its own, I suggest that it is strongly informed by the first major strand, Marcus' ethical outlook. The two final strands fall within Marcus' exploration of the interface between ethics and other branches of philosophy, namely logic or dialectic and physics or the study of nature. In this connection, I examine Marcus' distinctive way of dealing with questions crucial for Stoicism, namely, how, and how far, human psychological capacities and the nature of the universe as a whole are compatible with Stoic ethical ideals. I see these questions as forming the other two main strands in the work. A recurrent theme of my discussion of these two latter strands is the much debated question whether the *Meditations* constitute orthodox Stoic doctrine, in so far as this can be definitely established.[2] Although I do not

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[1] On the sense in which the *Meditations* (*Med.*) should be considered a work of philosophy, see van Ackeren 2011: 25–38, 707–13; on reception of *Med.*, see van Ackeren 2012: part 6.

[2] On the complex, even problematic, nature of our sources for Stoic theory, see Introd., n. 26.

ignore the features of the *Meditations* that have been seen as non-standard, I think Marcus is much more in line with mainstream Stoicism than is sometimes claimed. On the interpretation offered here, the *Meditations* do not only offer a unique and powerful version of ancient practical ethics. They also provide an eloquent, if unusual, statement of the main principles of Stoic ethics and of their interconnections with Stoic theory more broadly.

The Meditations—*Main Features*

All the external and internal indications point, I think, to the conclusion that the *Meditations* constitute a purely private notebook of philosophical reflections, prepared by Marcus for his own use with no thought of publication. There is no evidence that its existence was known in Marcus' lifetime or by subsequent generations in antiquity. The work was transmitted, by a rather slender manuscript tradition, up to its first publication in the Renaissance.[3] But the early vague references to the work and the lack of an agreed title indicate that the original text had no title and was intended for Marcus' sole use.[4] The titles now attached to the work ('to himself', *Meditations, Pensées, Selbstbetrachtungen*) have all been supplied by editors or translators.[5] What this suggests is that the notebook, whether written down by Marcus himself or his secretary, was preserved after his death, quite possibly in the form in which it was left at that point.

   Book 1 does have a distinct structure, and consists of a connected account of what Marcus owes to specific people, and the gods, in his ethical development.[6] However, apart from this book, there is little evidence of deliberate organization. In some cases, there are clusters of quoted passages; in others, neighbouring passages have similar or related themes.[7]

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   [3] The first printed edition (1559) was based on one manuscript, subsequently lost; there is only one other complete manuscript still extant, along with other manuscripts containing extracts.

   [4] The work is referred to as 'recommendations' (*parangelmata*) by Themistius (4th cent. AD), 'ethical writings to himself' by Arethas (*c*. 850–935). It is quoted, as taken from 'the conduct (*agōgē*) of his own life', by the encyclopaedia known as the *Suda* (*c*. 950).

   [5] On the textual transmission, commentary, and translation of *Med*., see Ceporina 2012; also Farquharson 1944: xiii–lvii, Dalfen 1987: v–xxvii, Hadot and Luna 1998: xii–xxx, and van Ackeren 2011: 49–51.

   [6] For a separate discussion of Book 1, see Introd. to Book 1.

   [7] For clusters of quotations or notes, see 7.35–7.46, 7.50–7.51. (All refs. not otherwise identified are to books and chapters of *Med*.) On 'interwoven composition' (i.e. the studied juxtaposition of topics), see Hadot 1998: 263–75. On the organization of ideas in *Med*., see Giavatto 2008: 15–27, 2012b, Gourinat 2102b.

However, for most readers, the overall impression is of a series of individual reflections, which are unified only by the underlying thought-world of the author. It is widely assumed that Marcus simply noted down his thoughts whenever he had time from his pressing tasks as emperor, perhaps at the beginning or end of the day, and that the *Meditations* represent the surviving notes.[8]

How does the composition of the *Meditations* fit in with Marcus' life as a whole? Marcus, born in 121 as Marcus Annius Verus,[9] was brought up, after his father's early death, by his grandfather, a relative of the emperor Hadrian, and was admired for his character by Hadrian, who nicknamed him *Verissimus* ('most truthful'). In 138, Hadrian adopted as his successor Antoninus Pius, and required Antoninus to adopt Marcus, then aged seventeen, along with the younger boy Lucius Verus. Marcus then began what turned out to be a long period of preparation for the imperial role. This included an extensive educational programme, in both rhetoric and philosophy, about which we know a good deal both from Book 1 of the *Meditations* and the surviving letters to Fronto, his teacher of Latin rhetoric. On the death of Antoninus in 161, Marcus (now called Marcus Aurelius Antoninus) became the senior co-emperor with Lucius until the latter's death in 169, then sole emperor till his own death (180).[10] Although the date of the writing of the *Meditations* is uncertain, it seems to belong to the latter period of Marcus' life (168–80).[11] These were difficult years for Marcus, including a serious invasion of Italy by German tribes in 170, a long series of campaigns in Germany, and a revolt against Marcus by Avidius Cassius, governor of Egypt and Syria, in 175. Two of the books of the *Meditations* have headings stating that those books (or perhaps just the adjacent chapters) were written in Germany.[12] So it is quite possible that much of the *Meditations* was written in moments snatched from the intense,

[8] See Farquharson 1944: lviii–lxxiv, Brunt 1974: 1–5, van Ackeren 2011: 51–6. These discussions also record (1) suggestions by previous scholars that the *Meditations* constitute materials for a planned ethical handbook and (2) earlier attempts to rearrange the passages in a more systematic order.

[9] Dates given are AD unless otherwise indicated.

[10] On Marcus' life, see Birley 1987 (1993), 2012b, and 2012c.

[11] There are references to Marcus' adoptive father Antoninus Pius (1.16, 4.33, 6.30) and to his adoptive brother Verus (8.25, 8.37) stating or implying they are dead (Verus died in 169); the plague of 168–9 seems to be referred to in 9.2.

[12] The headings are '[Written] among the Quadi on the River Gran', and '[Written] in Carnuntum', attached to the start of Book 2 and 3 (or perhaps the end of Books 1 and 2). Marcus campaigned against the Quadi from 168 and was based at Carnuntum during 170–3. On Marcus' German campaigns, see Birley 2012d.

though finally successful, campaigns Marcus directed in Germany. It is sometimes thought that Book 1 was written as a whole at one time, and perhaps composed after the rest of the work, though placed at some point at the start of the manuscript.[13]

What reason do we have for thinking that the *Meditations* is a distinctively Stoic work? Some features of the *Meditations* seem to point to a rather limited knowledge of Stoicism or engagement with it. Marcus never presents himself as a Stoic (indeed, he speaks of 'the Stoics', in 5.10 as though he is not one); he never cites Zeno, the founder of Stoicism (334–262 BC), and only twice refers to Chrysippus (c.280–c.206 BC), the most important Stoic theorist (6.42, 7.19). By contrast, he refers often to non-Stoic thinkers including Heraclitus and Plato. In the review of ethical influences on him in Book 1, he is sparing in his direct references to Stoicism. He also twice stresses (1.17.22, 7.67) his incomplete grasp of two of the branches of knowledge which, along with ethics, made up the Stoic philosophical curriculum, namely logic and physics. However, other indications points to a deep and lasting engagement with philosophy, especially Stoicism. Some evidence suggests that Marcus was drawn to the philosophical life from an early age (seventeen or even twelve).[14] A letter written in 146–7, when Marcus was twenty-five, shows the powerful impact of the ethical writings of the early Stoic Aristo.[15] In the *Meditations*, Marcus highlights the influence of Junius Rusticus, a Stoic who taught him philosophy, probably also around 146–7, and who remained a close confidant of the emperor.[16] In 1.7.8, in a brief but significant comment, Marcus notes that Rusticus introduced him to Epictetus' *Discourses*, a work which is frequently cited, or alluded to, in the *Meditations*. Marcus also comments on his limited involvement in logic and physics, by contrast with ethics; and these comments need to be taken in the light of the well-marked theme in earlier Stoic writings by Seneca and Epictetus, that these branches of knowledge should be studied primarily in order to promote ethical development and not for their own sake.[17] These

[13] See Brunt 1974: 18–19, Rutherford 1989: 45–7, van Ackeren 2011: 56–8, Ceporina 2012: 45–6; also Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 6–7.

[14] See Comm. on 1.6.5; and HA, *Vita Marci* 2.6; see also van den Hout 1999: viii–ix. On the (variable) evidential value of HA, *Vita Marci*, see Birley 2012a.

[15] *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.13 (van den Hout 1988: 67–8, Haines 1919: 1.214–1.216, trans. Hard and Gill 2011: 137–8). The letter has sometimes been seen as marking a 'conversion' from rhetoric to philosophy; but this view is no longer widely held (see Comm. on 1.7).

[16] See Hadot and Luna 1998: lxxxiv–xcv.

[17] See 1.17.22, 7.67.3, also 5.5.1–5.5.3, 8.1.1–8.1.2. On the primacy of ethics for Seneca and Epictetus, see Long 1996: 104–6, 2002: 116–17, Cooper 2004: 314–20; see also Introd., text to n. 170.

indications are mixed; but taken as a whole, they are consistent, I think, with the kind of engagement with Stoic ideas we find in the *Meditations*. Scholars differ on how far that engagement goes; but my view is that Marcus' book, though unsystematic in form and mostly non-technical in style (though Stoic vocabulary is sometimes used), is strongly pervaded by Stoic doctrines. The presentation of ethical thought is largely in line with Stoicism as presented in other sources, though it is handled in a distinctive way. The treatment of ideas on the interface of ethics and logic or physics is rather less standard, and is sometimes quite non-standard. But even in these cases, it is crucial to take into account Marcus' central ethical concerns, and, when we do so, the impression of unorthodoxy diminishes.

If the *Meditations* is, primarily at least, a work of Stoic philosophy, what kind of work is it? In broad terms, it is clear that the *Meditations* belongs, along with Seneca's letters and essays and surviving reports of the teaching of Musonius Rufus and Epictetus, to what is, in modern terms, 'practical ethics'. This is not a recognized ancient category; and it is important not to overstate the contrast with more theoretical types of writings on Stoic ethics. But it is a convenient way of demarcating types of writing and teaching with a distinct focus and style, which seem to have been quite widespread in the first and second centuries AD, and not only in Stoicism. The main common feature is a focus on putting ethical principles into action, especially on using these principles to shape the overall direction of one's life. In Stoic writings, this objective is underpinned by the distinctive Stoic theory of ethical development as 'appropriation', discussed later. A further recurrent feature is the formulation of methods, usually with several stages or aspects, designed to enable people to take forward their own ethical development or education and embed this in their lives.[18] Typically, these works are non-technical in style and aim at a relatively broad range of addressees, at least among the well-off, educated, Greco-Roman élite. Even so, both Stoic and non-Stoic versions of practical ethics tend to be written from a determinate philosophical standpoint.[19]

The *Meditations* reflect most of these general features, and show the influence especially of Epictetus' *Discourses*. However, there are some important distinctive features. These are indicated in this short passage

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[18] See Gill 2003b: 40–4, Sellars 2003: chs. 5–7, 2007. On *Med.*, considered in relationship to previous Stoic practical ethics, see Gill 2012a: esp. 385–8. On 'appropriation', see Introd., text to nn. 80–2.

[19] See e.g. Plutarch's works of this kind, written from a Platonic standpoint, on which, see Van Hoof 2010. On a wide range of such writings, see Foucault 1990.

(4.3.1–4.3.3), in which Marcus seems to be commenting on his own proce-
dure in the *Meditations.*

[1] People look for retreats for themselves, in the country, by the coast, or in the hills;
and you too are especially inclined to feel this desire. [2] But this is altogether
un-philosophical, when it is possible for you to retreat into yourself at any time you
want. There is nowhere that a person can find a more peaceful and trouble-free retreat
than in his own mind, especially if he has within himself the kind of thoughts that let
him dip into them and so gain ease of mind; and by ease of mind, I mean nothing but
having one's own mind in good order. [3] So constantly give yourself this retreat and
renew yourself. You should have to hand concise and fundamental principles, which
will be enough, as soon as you encounter them, to cleanse you from all distress and
send you back without resentment at the activities to which you return.

In Seneca's letters and Epictetus' teachings, the thinker addresses other
people, encouraging (or haranguing or arguing) them into improving their
own characters and lives. The *Meditations* is—uniquely among such
works—self-addressed. Although Marcus internalizes some of the styles of
Stoic interpersonal discourse, the fact that the notebook is self-directed
gives it a special character and tone.[20] A second difference lies in the length
of the discourses and the correlated mode of exposition. Both Seneca and
Epictetus typically discuss a single topic or two related topics in Stoic ethics
at sufficient length to expound salient aspects in some depth. In Marcus'
notebook, most entries are quite short: they may treat one or two themes or
a cluster of related themes, but do so in a brief, lapidary, sometimes orac-
ular style. As Marcus puts it here, they convey 'concise and fundamental
principles', which presuppose the much fuller exposition or analysis that
might be provided by Epictetus or, still more, by a full-scale Stoic treatise.
In this respect, Marcus is using the notebook to remind himself of ideas
that he is already familiar with. Put differently, he uses the act of writing to
encapsulate in concentrated form, or to restate with variations, what he
sees as core themes of Stoic theory.[21] Of course, the same point could be
made about the doxographical summaries of Stoic ethics and other
branches of knowledge that we find in ancient encyclopaedic works by
Diogenes Laertius and Stobaeus; and Marcus' entries sometimes evoke
such summaries.[22] But Marcus' entries are, sometimes visibly, the product

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[20] See further on this point Introd., text to nn. 66–7. On the expressive modes of Epictetus,
see Long 2002: 52–66, and on those of Seneca, see Inwood 2007: xx–xxi.
[21] On this function of *Med.*, see Rutherford 1989: 126–37, Hadot 1998: 37–43, van Ackeren
2011: 308–16, Giavatto 2012b: 335–7, 339–42. The Stoic theoretical background presupposed
by Marcus is brought out fully in Comm. to Books 2–6.
[22] See e.g. Introd., text to n. 217. On ancient doxography, see Mansfeld 1999: 17–19.

of individual effort; also he aims not just at exposition but at bringing home to himself the emotional force, ethical significance, and intellectual profundity of these ideas. As expressed in this passage, the aim is 'to cleanse yourself from all distress, and send you back without resentment at the activities to which you return' (4.3.3). These features make the *Meditations* an arresting and personal version of Stoic practical ethics.

On the whole, the ideas presented in this genre by Seneca and Epictetus match standard Stoic teachings, though they are sometimes formulated in ways that reflect the practical and ethical focus of the works in which these ideas occur. This is what one would expect; Epictetus was one of the leading Stoic teachers of his day, and Seneca, though not a teacher in the same way, was a committed and expert adherent of Stoicism, who also wrote more technical works including the *Natural Questions*.[23] But Marcus, a Roman emperor writing for himself alone, is in a different position. Even if much that he writes is, unmistakably, Stoic in character, the question may still naturally arise how far the *Meditations* constitute orthodox Stoic doctrines. As noted earlier, Marcus himself seems to offer rather mixed signals on this point; and modern scholars have offered quite divergent views. Some scholars present the work as deliberately eclectic, fusing Stoic with Platonic and other influences,[24] or as not theoretically coherent, even amateurish, in its treatment of some aspects of Stoic theory, especially logic and philosophical reasoning.[25] Other treatments, while not ignoring the features of the work that have been seen as eclectic or confused, claim that the *Meditations* make good sense as a coherent expression of Stoic thinking. These discussions assume that Stoic theory provides the main explanatory framework for the *Meditations*, and that apparently non-standard aspects should be located against that background, rather than being taken as the basis for characterizing the work. Taking this view does not prevent one from recognizing that Marcus—like other Stoic writers—expresses his version of Stoicism in a distinctive, and in some sense strongly personal, way.[26] The latter

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[23] On Epictetus' philosophical position, see Long 2002: 18–34, on Seneca, see Inwood 2005: index, under 'Stoicism, Seneca's attitude to'.

[24] See e.g. Rist 1983, Asmis 1989, Alesse 2001.

[25] See e.g. Barnes 1997: 1–2, Cooper 2004: 364–8.

[26] Vogt 2008: 17–19 reminds us that we have lost all Hellenistic Stoic treatises (except for quotations and reports) and are left only with later summaries that, very probably, homogenize divergent emphases and styles among early Stoic writers. On our sources for Hellenistic philosophy as a whole, see Mansfeld 1999.

approach has been strongly marked in some recent discussions and is the one adopted here.[27]

Two broader features of recent scholarly debate are worth noting here. One is the recognition that eclecticism (in the sense of the deliberate combination of a number of philosophical theories) is a rather exceptional feature of Hellenistic and Roman thought. A more common move is adopting a specific philosophical standpoint but in a more inclusive or innovative way than is normal.[28] However, I am not sure that Marcus is eclectic even in this latter sense; more common in his work is the use of language which evokes other theories with the aim of accentuating an essentially Stoic ethical message.[29] A second relevant feature of recent scholarship is that there is a greater readiness to explore closely the conceptual and expressive modes of Stoic practical ethical works.[30] This attitude has now largely replaced a rather general assumption that such works represent inferior or diluted versions of Stoic philosophy. Applying this approach is a rather delicate exercise since it involves correlating the work in question with other Stoic sources while also seeking to identify the distinctive orientation or 'voice' of the work or thinker in question. It also involves reflecting on the specific project undertaken by the thinker concerned in the relevant work, which may go beyond simply formulating Stoic doctrines. This approach seems to me to represent the best available one for making sense of the combination found in the *Meditations* of a pervasively Stoic standpoint with some non-standard idioms and lines of thought.

Is There a Core Project?

However, crucial for this approach is defining exactly what kind of project Marcus undertakes in the *Meditations*. I do so, shortly, by reference to four strands which make up a framework within which we can place the main recurrent themes in the work. First, however, I consider some recent

[27] See e.g. Giavatto 2008, van Ackeren 2011, Gourinat 2012a and 2012b; also Gill 2007a, 2007b, 2011, and 2012a.

[28] Dillon and Long 1988 has been influential in changing scholarly thinking on this point. A more credible candidate than Marcus for ancient eclecticism is Galen, one of Marcus' doctors, or the self-proclaimed eclectic philosopher, Potamo (1st cent. BC Alexandria): see (on Galen) Hankinson 1992, (on Potamo) Hatzimichali 2011.

[29] See Introd., text to nn. 191–211.

[30] For this type of approach, see e.g. Hadot 1998 (on *Med.*), Long 2002 (on Epictetus), and Inwood 2005 and 2007 (on Seneca). Contrast Bonhöffer 1890 and 1894, which treat Epictetus' teachings, as reported by Arrian, as virtually the same in kind as Stoic treatises (see further Dobbin 1998: xiv–xviii).

accounts of Marcus' project, those of Michel Foucault, Pierre Hadot, and Marcel van Ackeren, which help to define the approach taken here.

Foucault comments only briefly on Marcus Aurelius in his well-known book, *The Care of the Self*, on writings of the first and second centuries AD, though he discusses the *Meditations* more fully in his lecture-series of 1981–2, published posthumously as *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*.[31] Foucault, in a celebrated passage, presents as a special feature of the intellectual life of this period 'the insistence on the attention that should be brought to bear on oneself', and, more precisely, 'an intensification of the relationship by which one constituted oneself as a subject of one's acts'.[32] Foucault's book on the 'care of the self' (or 'care of oneself')[33] is designed to survey what he regards as a salient feature of the cultural life of the early Roman empire, rather than to analyse specific philosophical texts in detail. Also, his treatment of Roman ideas and the whole history of sexuality of which the book forms one section, are conceived by him as an integral part of his work as a social critic and theorist, and not simply as interpretative exegesis of past ideas and practices.[34] However, although it is not Foucault's main aim to make sense of the philosophical project of a work such as the *Meditations*, it is worth considering how far his treatment can help us to do so and to pinpoint where we need to go further than he does in order to form a comprehensive and detailed understanding of Marcus' text.

I think that Foucault's analysis is useful in identifying three general characteristics of intellectual and cultural life in the first and second centuries AD, which also underlie Marcus' project in the *Meditations*. One is the idea that it is appropriate and desirable for people—at least, for educated and well-off adult men—to devote thought and energy to promoting their own happiness and well-being in addition to more immediate practical concerns.[35]

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[31] See Foucault 1990 (first published 1984): 46–7, 50–1, 90, and 2005 (lecture-series of 1981–2): 158–64, 198–202, 214–19, 289–309.

[32] Foucault 1990: 41 (see also 41–50); on this passage, see also Gill 2006: 330.

[33] Foucault's 1990 book title, *Le Souci de soi*, is probably best translated as 'care of oneself', although the standard English translation is 'care of the self'; on this point and its possible significance for understanding Foucault's ideas on this topic, see Inwood 2005: 329 fn. 8, 332 fn. 12. I use both versions of the translation here.

[34] On the linkage between his study of antiquity and his social theory, see (in outline) Gill 2006: 334–5, also Pradeau 2002, Gros 2005; and, from a critical standpoint, Detel 2005: ch. 1, esp. at 6–11 (focused on Foucault 1984).

[35] Foucault also includes in the 'care of oneself' concern for one's long-term physical health, which is a strong preoccupation in this period (as in earlier periods of Classical antiquity), but which is not present in the *Meditations*. See Foucault 1990: 41, 56–8, also ch. 4, and 2005: 159–60, on health as a theme in the correspondence between Marcus and Fronto (on the contrast between the letters and *Med.* in this respect, see Gill 2012b: 36–45).

Another is that achieving this objective successfully requires sustained and systematic attention to the management of one's life; 'self-cultivation' in this sense constitutes a craft or technique of living. Thirdly, although carrying out this project is something that each of us is responsible for as an agent, this does not mean that we should regard ourselves as isolated or self-centred individuals; 'care of oneself' also involves sustained concern with other people and our mode of relating to others. Also, although the others involved may be members of the same family or social community, the conventions or rules of those social groups do not, by themselves, provide a normative framework for the conduct of our relationships with others. This framework is set, rather, by the findings of the continuing project of 'care of oneself' and the mode of reflective living associated with this project. Foucault's study is helpful in identifying important features of intellectual thought in this period, which are based on a long tradition of earlier Greek thought.[36] Related dimensions of the thought of the period have been accentuated, from different standpoints, by subsequent, more specialized, studies, especially those of the philosophical therapy of emotions. These studies have also sometimes suggested that ancient thinking on these topics is, potentially at least, valuable for us moderns in helping us to shape our lives.[37] The idea that 'care of oneself', as formulated in Roman philosophical texts such as the *Meditations*, can contribute to the widespread interest in modern Western culture in finding a 'guide to life', and in promoting the search for happiness or personal fulfilment, has become an important theme in recent writings directed at a broad readership.[38] Thus, Foucault's approach to Roman imperial versions of the care of the self, which combines a selective review of past ideas with an, at least implicit, concern with their potential contribution to modern practice,[39] has proved to be pioneering as well as influential.

How far is Foucault's work also useful in showing how the general ancient project of self-care is worked out in the *Meditations*? Here, the

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[36] See Foucault 1990: parts 2–3, 37–95. For more recent and detailed treatments of these features of the imperial period, see Sellars 2003, on Epictetus and Marcus; Trapp 2007: chs. 4–5, on intellectual and cultural life in general. On Seneca and the self, see Bartsch and Wray 2009, including discussion of Foucault's treatment of Seneca (see index under 'Foucault, M.').

[37] See e.g. Nussbaum 1994, Sorabji 2000: chs. 14–15, Long 2002, Gill 2010a: ch. 5, and 350–63; also Gill 2013b.

[38] See e.g. Evans 2012: chs. 2–4; also, on the related use of Stoic therapy as a means of enhancing current practice in cognitive psychotherapy, Robertson 2012.

[39] On this combination, see refs. in Introd., n. 34.

results are much more modest. This is partly because, as noted earlier, his remarks on Marcus are very generalized in *The Care of the Self* and, for the most part, in the 1981–2 lecture series. One genuinely illuminating observation is that Marcus, in the *Meditations*, views his imperial role from an ethical standpoint, rather than a typically political one; in this sense, being an emperor is 'a job [an ethical one] like any other'.[40] Also one of the lectures offers an extended discussion of Marcus' 'analytic' or 'stripping' method, especially as deployed in *Med.* 3.11. However, Foucault's treatment of this topic, which is strongly indebted to Hadot, offers little more than selective paraphrase of the relevant passages. Certainly, there is no systematic or coherent attempt to link this reading with the key features of the project of self-care, as set out in his book on this subject, although this was composed around the same time.[41]

Also, Foucault's comments on Marcus and other Stoic writers, in both contexts, are marked by certain general features of his thought or methodology which limit their usefulness as historical or critical interpretation. This is not only because Foucault was not (nor did he claim to be) a specialist in Hellenistic or Roman philosophy.[42] There are also conceptual features that militate against Foucault's providing a convincing and detailed account of Marcus' version of the project of self-care. For one thing, although he focuses in the *Meditations*, and in the other ancient writings discussed, on—what he calls—'ethics', he does not engage specifically with the core concepts or claims of ethics, as understood in Stoicism, such as the thesis that virtue constitutes happiness (*eudaimonia*). He also ignores completely the close linkage in Stoic theory between ethics, physics, and logic, which is crucial for making sense of the *Meditations*.[43] Even if we

[40] Foucault 2005: 201, and 198–202; see also Foucault 1990: 89–90; compare the discussion of Marcus' thinking on his political role in Introd., text to nn. 116–22. For less penetrating comments, on *metanoia* ('change of mind' or 'conversion') and self-fashioning in *Med.* and other Roman texts, see Foucault 2005: 214–19.

[41] Foucault 2005: 290–309, referring in 292 to Hadot 1981: 119–33. See further on Foucault's reading, Sellars 2012: 538–40. On *Med.* 3.11 and the 'analytic' method, see Introd., text to nn. 98–103. On the relationship between the composition of the 1981–2 lectures and the 1990 book (first published in 1984), see Gros 2005: 512–17.

[42] Also, as underlined by Gros 2005: 519–20, scholarly commentary on works of Roman Stoicism such as *Med.* and their background in Hellenistic philosophy was much more limited than it is now.

[43] On 'ethics' in Foucault, understood as 'the aesthetics of existence', see Gros 2005: 529–39. For criticism of Foucault's failure to engage with Stoic ethics, and on the links with other branches of knowledge, see Hadot 1995: 24–5, 206–13; see also Detel 2005: ch. 2, focused on the partial and limited treatment of Aristotelian ethics in Foucault 1984.

concentrate on the ideas which are central to Foucault's interpretation, such as 'the self' or 'self-care', we run into difficulties if we try to correlate his account closely with other scholarly discussions of these topics. For instance, it is far from easy to establish whether Foucault, in comments such as those cited earlier (Introd., text to n. 32), is maintaining that Roman imperial thinkers such as Seneca and Marcus formulated a substantively new concept of 'the self', or, rather, evolved a new attitude, of care or concern, towards the self, as conceived in earlier (Platonic or Stoic) terms.[44] A further problem lies in the fact that, at least in his book on 'the care of the self', the main underlying concern is with sexuality. More specifically, his interest lies in the idea that personal identity (or 'self-care') is bound up crucially with exploring one's own individual sexual pleasure in ways that are not constrained by existing social or religious norms. In this respect, of course, Foucault articulates a dominant late twentieth-century preoccupation; but it is one that makes it difficult for him to engage closely with, for instance, Stoic ethics, which has a very different set of priorities.[45]

Hence, although Foucault's broad characterization of the idea of the 'care of oneself' in Roman imperial thought forms a suggestive background for understanding the project that underlies the *Meditations*, taking this insight further requires us to go beyond what Foucault himself provides. I think that the three approaches to Marcus discussed shortly, those of Hadot, van Ackeren, and my own, can be seen as bridging the gap between Foucault's (credible) general account of the 'care of oneself' as conceived in Roman imperial thought and detailed interpretation of the content of Marcus' specific version of this project in the *Meditations*. They engage closely—as Foucault does not—with the key concepts of Stoic ethics and the linkage between ethics and other branches of Stoic philosophy. All three treatments show how Marcus' reflective notebook serves as the vehicle for a sustained programme of ethical self-improvement ('care of oneself', in this sense), which also embraces reflectively based treatment of other people. They also bring out how this project of ethical self-improvement, conceived in Stoic terms, involves reflection on cognate dimensions of Stoic physics and logic—aspects of Hellenistic theory that

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[44] For this criticism, see Inwood 2005: 331–52.

[45] See Foucault 1990: parts 1, 4–6, where this theme is dominant. On the relationship between Foucault's personal experience and the evolution of his theories about sexuality and social norms, see Gros 2005: 543–5. For criticism of Foucault 1984 for over-selective (even arbitrary) reading of Hippocratic medical texts regarding sexuality, see Detel 2005: 109–17.

Foucault, in conversation with Paul Veyne, described as 'enormous excrescences'.[46] Although none of these interpretations is presented as completing Foucault's treatment, it is, none the less, useful to read them as offering a fully elaborated application to Marcus' book of Foucault's suggestive, but generalized, treatment.

 Before turning to these other interpretations, I consider briefly one other general question raised by Foucault's approach to this topic. In discussing the notion of the 'care of oneself' in Roman Imperial writings, Foucault gives a prominent place to ideas such as self-consciousness and subjectivity, which have played a central role in much modern Western thinking about the concept of self.[47] Some of his most detailed discussions centre on these ideas, such as his analysis of a passage in Plato's *Alcibiades* which he takes as prefiguring the subjective self-awareness seen by him as prevalent in Imperial texts.[48] However, even if we accept the assumption that any given human culture has an idea of 'self' in some sense, it is much more open to question whether this idea is, in all cultures, centred on subjectivity and self-consciousness.[49] In response to this question, at least as it bears on ancient thought, I have elsewhere formulated a contrast between a 'subjective-individualist' and an 'objective-participant' conception of self. In very broad terms, the first conception focuses on ideas, notably those of 'I'-centred subjectivity and self-consciousness and unique personal identity, which have been crucial for much—though by no means all—modern thinking about selfhood. The second conception underlines ideas which play an analogously important role in ancient thinking about what is important in human beings, and which are also accentuated in some modern thinking about human nature and personhood. This conception stresses the importance of rationality (rather than 'I'-centred self-consciousness) and social participation (rather than unique individuality) as core human characteristics. Ethical life is seen as grounded, ultimately, through shared reflection on objective normative principles, rather than by treating one's own personal identity or uniquely 'first-personal' viewpoint

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 [46] See Hadot 1995: 24–5.

 [47] This is true even though Foucault sometimes dissociates himself from the intellectual traditions (e.g. Cartesian and Kantian) which have informed modern ideas about self-consciousness and individuality (see Gill 2006: 334–5).

 [48] See Inwood 2005: 331–8, Gill 2006: 348–9, referring to Foucault 2001: 39, 52, 54–7, on Pl. *Alc.* 129e–130c (both of us challenge Foucault's reading).

 [49] On the general question whether concepts such as 'self' or 'person' are universal or culture-specific, see Carrithers et al. 1985, and Sorabji 2006: part 1.

as a primary source of guidance. This contrast is useful, in part at least, because it enables us to identify what we can characterize as ancient Greek and Roman ideas about the 'self' without also attributing to ancient culture the (typically modern Western) view that subjectivity and individuality are central features of selfhood or personhood.[50]

This contrast between conceptions of self was originally formulated with a view to defining salient features of Classical Greek thinking on human nature. But I think it is equally useful in helping us to make sense of Hellenistic and Roman thought on this topic, even though we can also identify other important changes between Classical Greek and Hellenistic-Roman thought on what is central in human nature and psychology.[51] In particular, I have argued that the conception of selfhood implied in Epictetus' *Discourses* is best interpreted in 'objective-participant' terms, even though it has sometimes been seen as prefiguring the modern 'subjective-individualist' conception.[52] I do not propose to mount here a similar extended argument about the idea of self implied in the *Meditations*. But I note some features which suggest that Marcus' thinking too is best interpreted in 'objective-participant' terms.

I accept that the whole form and approach of the *Meditations* expresses a kind of sustained self-consciousness or self-attention, a point which is strongly implied in Foucault's reading of *Med.* 3.11.[53] But it does not follow that Marcus presupposes, as much modern thought does, that self-consciousness, especially consciousness of being a unique 'I', constitutes what is distinctive or central in human nature. On the contrary, there is every reason to think that Marcus, in line with Stoic thought in general, sees rationality, rather than self-consciousness, as what is distinctive of (adult) humans, along with god or gods. Also, in line with Stoic thinking generally, Marcus sees a close linkage between the distinctively human possession of rationality and that of sociability or community-membership, as illustrated in his repeated coupling of 'rational' and 'sociable' as human characteristics. By contrast with the modern notion of self-consciousness,

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[50] See Gill 1996: 1–18 and ch. 6; also Gill 2008. Another possible use of this contrast is to enable critical examination of our own (modern) conceptions of self, and to question the validity of one or other conception.

[51] E.g. in Stoic and Epicurean thought, I think, we find a unified or holistic conception of human psychology and a correlated picture of ethical development that are substantively different from those in Plato and Aristotle; see Gill 2006: 3–4, 129–45, 177–84.

[52] See Gill 2006: ch. 6, esp. 371–91.

[53] See Foucault 2005: 290–8.

rationality, as understood in Stoicism at least, is not normally linked with the idea of a unique 'I' as the locus of subjectivity.[54] Finally, in looking for the ultimate grounds or norms of ethical life, as the *Meditations* repeatedly do, Marcus—even if he sometimes looks 'within himself'—does not find such norms in anything that is uniquely personal or private. On the contrary, he stresses repeatedly the significance of seeing himself as part of a much larger whole, namely the human race or the cosmos, understood as, in some sense, sources of ethical normativity.[55] In all these ways, the conception of selfhood expressed in the *Meditations* seems to fall clearly within the 'objective-participant', rather than 'subjective-individualist', category. If we accept this view, there are certain implications for our assessment of Foucault's interpretation of Marcus' work. One is that we can accept the validity of Foucault's view that works such as the *Meditations* express not only a determinate sense of self but also a strong interest in sustained self-care. However, we will interpret these ideas in 'objective-participant' terms, rather than those of Foucault, which stress the importance of subjectivity and self-consciousness. A merit of this response is that we can eliminate (what I see as) a persistent tension in Foucault's writing between the terms of analysis he uses to characterize Imperial writings such as the *Meditations* and those deployed by the thinkers themselves.

I move now from Foucault to two more recent and sustained analyses of the *Meditations* and its core project and objectives, namely those of Pierre Hadot (1995, 1998) and Marcel van Ackeren (2011). Common to both treatments is the assumption that the *Meditations* constitute a work of consistently Stoic practical philosophy, rather than a collection of purely personal or eclectic reflections. Both authors also believe that in this work Stoic ideas drawn from outside ethics (that is, from logic and physics) are integrated in an overarching, and primarily ethical, framework. In other respects, however, they interpret Marcus' aims quite differently.

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[54] On relevant features of Marcus' thinking, see Introd., text to nn. 110–15; on the Stoic view that rationality (not self-consciousness) is distinctive of (adult) humans, see Gill 1996: 50–2, 56–8, 2006: 139–45, 337.

[55] See e.g. *Med*. 4.3, where Marcus' move to look 'within himself' (4.3.1–4.3.2), cited at Introd., text to n. 20, leads him to reaffirm the validity of a series of general, normative principles, including the idea that he is an integral part of the human race and the universe (4.3.4–4.3.9). On the use of cosmic nature as a norm in *Med*., see Introd., text to nn. 215–25. On the idea of self in *Med*., also stressing the importance of the idea of seeing oneself as a part of the cosmic whole, see Long 2012.

According to Hadot, the key to Marcus' *Meditations*, and also Epictetus' *Discourses*, is a three-stage educational programme, which Epictetus formulates and Marcus adopts. Epictetus' programme centres on a process of ethical self-development, involving three interrelated kinds of exercise or discipline. The three exercises are focused on desire, impulse or motivation, and assent, respectively. More precisely, the first exercise aims to focus desire on what is 'up to us' (ethical agency), rather than on 'indifferents'; the second exercise aims to direct motivation towards 'appropriate actions', especially in our relations with other people; the third exercise aims to shape our beliefs so that we only 'assent' to true (and ethically well grounded) impressions.[56] On the face of it, this is a programme of practical ethics. But Hadot also associates each stage of the programme with one of the three branches of knowledge in Stoicism. He links the first with physics or the study of nature, the second with ethics, and the third with logic. More precisely, he connects them with what he calls 'lived philosophy', that is, drawing out the ethical implications of the relevant branch of knowledge.[57] Hadot believes that this programme, as he interprets it, provides a unifying and systematic framework both for Epictetus' teachings, as recorded by Arrian, and for Marcus' *Meditations.*[58] In his monograph on Marcus' work, he uses this framework as a basis for making sense of the use made in the *Meditations* of themes from different branches of Stoic philosophy. For instance, he interprets Marcus' frequent references to the idea that the universe (or 'the whole') is the informing context for human life as an expression of the first exercise or topic, directed at shaping one's desire by reference to Stoic physics. Similarly, he sees Marcus' stress on the importance of making self-conscious, ethically shaped, judgements as an expression of the third exercise, that of applied logic or dialectic.[59] For Hadot, then, the *Meditations* serve as the vehicle for a single project: they help him to perform these three, interlocked exercises as a means of taking

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[56] See Epict. *Diss.* 3.2.1–3.2.15 (=LS 56 C); also, on one or more of these topics, 1.4.11, 2.17.14–2.17.18, 3.12.13–3.12.15, 4.10.13. See further on Epictetus' method, Bonhöffer 1890: 19–28, Inwood 1985: 116–19, Dobbin 1998: 91–4, Sellars 2003: 134–42. For the philosophical terminology used here, see LS 56–9; see also the next section of this Introd., 'Marcus' Ethical Outlook'.

[57] See Hadot 1995: 11–12, 191–5; also Hadot 1991: 218, 1998: 89–98. For this view about the linkage between branches of knowledge, see also Bonhöffer 1890: 22–8, 1894: 46–9, 58–60 (trans. by Stephens 1996: 78–85).

[58] See Hadot 1998: 35–53, 82–100; also refs. in Introd., n. 63.

[59] See Hadot 1998: chs. 6–7, also ch. 8 on the third exercise (in outline, Hadot 1995: 197–9).

forward his ethical development by integrating these three branches of 'lived' philosophy.

Hadot's work on Marcus is well known and has played an important role in bringing the *Meditations* to the attention of a wide range of readers. His monographs, along with his valuable edition of *Med.* 1 (Hadot and Luna 1998), contain many illuminating insights. However, I think his approach also involves certain forms of schematism or over-generalization, which make it difficult to adopt his interpretation en bloc. The boldest schematism is the connection charted between Stoic modes of practical ethics and the methods of meditative prayer formulated by St Ignatius of Loyola, a sixteenth-century Christian, that leads Hadot to characterize the Stoic methods of reflection, along with some other ancient techniques, as 'spiritual exercises'.[60] Though bold, this linkage is relatively unproblematic, since it is, transparently, a comparison, and a suggestive one, between reflective practices in two quite different historical and cultural contexts. More questionable is the tendency virtually to equate the patterns of thought and language in Epictetus' *Discourses* and the *Meditations*.[61] Epictetus was, certainly, a major influence on Marcus' reflections; but that does not mean we can simply identify the intellectual framework of the two works.

However, the most problematic feature in Hadot's approach is the use of Epictetus' account of a three-fold method of practical ethics as the basis for positing a unifying and systematic framework underlying both Epictetus' *Discourses* and Marcus' *Meditations*. Epictetus' own references to this method are relatively brief and are not presented as setting out a comprehensive framework for his modes of ethical teaching.[62] The allusions in the *Meditations* to Epictetus' formulation of this method are few in number and un-emphatic.[63] Both accounts, especially Epictetus', are, certainly,

[60] Hadot 1995: 19–36, 81–144, 1998: 35–53. See also Sellars 2003: 111–15.

[61] See e.g. Hadot 1998: ch. 5, on Epictetus, which forms the basis for the following analysis of *Med.* (esp. in his chs. 6–8). For criticism of this identification, see van Ackeren 2011: 354–8; also 446, 458–9, distinguishing between the views of Epictetus and Marcus on religion.

[62] See refs. in Introd., n. 56. For this criticism, see also Barnes 1997: 34–5. Long 2002: 112–18, while noting the three-fold method, does not present it as the key to Epictetus' teaching methods as presented in the *Discourses*.

[63] *Med.* 11.37 is a quotation from a lost passage of Epictetus. See further 8.7.1, 9.7, and perhaps 8.28, 11.37, which seem to evoke Epictetus' method (these are the passages cited in Hadot 1998: 69–70). Three other passages (4.33.3, 7.54, and 9.6, cited by Hadot as 9.36), noted in Hadot 1995: 195–6, are more questionable. For similar comments on the limited nature of the echoes of Epictetus in *Med.*, see Bonhöffer 1890: 27, Roskam 2005: 130 fn. 622; also (explicitly critical of Hadot in this respect) van Ackeren 2011: 643–6.

suggestive for interpreting the intended function of works of this kind, along with Seneca's partly comparable account and related typologies in this period.[64] But there is little to indicate they are meant to provide a systematic methodological framework for the work as a whole of the kind Hadot constructs, especially in his monograph on the *Meditations* (1998: chs. 6–8). A further questionable move is the identification of the three stages or topics of Epictetus' account with the three branches of knowledge in Stoic philosophy, or, more precisely, with 'lived' versions of these branches. On the face of it, these three topics, like those in Seneca's account, are purely ethical, even though Epictetus himself suggests a connection between one of the topics and increased expertise in logical reasoning.[65] Hence, there are reasons for caution about adopting Hadot's analysis of the work in terms of the three types of exercise despite the many perceptive comments made by him in connection with this framework.

Van Ackeren also takes the *Meditations* to serve as the vehicle of a sustained programme of practical Stoic philosophy; but his two-volume study (2011) is differently organized and conveys a significantly different interpretative view. In his first volume, he examines in depth the formal and expressive styles of the work, stressing especially the idea that the *Meditations* constitute, uniquely among Stoic or other ancient writings, a self-directed dialogue (*Selbstdialog*). Marcus uses this special form to internalize modes of address, including advice (*parainesis*) and consolation, which figure in other examples of Stoic practical ethics, which are addressed to other people.[66] The main function of the written self-dialogue is for Marcus to bring home to himself core Stoic ideas, to absorb these intellectually and emotionally, and to make them part of the fabric of his life. The distinctive verbal and expressive style of the *Meditations*, compressed, reiterative, often aphoristic or oracular, is seen as designed to promote this process of self-guided absorption.[67] In his second volume, van Ackeren

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[64] See esp. Sen. *Ep.* 89.14 (= LS 56 B); also Stob. 2.39.20–2.41.25 (ethics subdivided by Philo of Larisa into protreptic, therapy, and advice). 2.42.7–2.45.6 (ethical topics subdivided by Eudorus into goals, motives, and actions); see also Gill 2003b: 42–4.

[65] See Introd., n. 57. The equation with the three branches of philosophy is questioned in Barnes 1997: 34, Dobbin 1998: 94, 164, Gill 2006: 388, Gourinat 2012a: 433. For more positive responses, see Long 2002: 117–18, 126, Sellars 2003: 134–6.

[66] See van Ackeren 2011: 114–80.

[67] See van Ackeren 2011: 288–316; also Rutherford 1989: 43–4, Giavatto 2012b. A relevant feature of *Med.* is a dialogue between Marcus' 'occurrent' and 'normative' selves, designed to encourage himself to live up to the high standards he sets himself. For this motif in Stoic practical ethics, see Long 2009: 26–9; see e.g. Comm. on 2.6, 3.5, 5.1, 5.5, 5.11. On the conception of selfhood implied in *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 53–5.

correlates the main themes of the *Meditations* with Stoic theory as presented in other sources. The analysis is organized by reference to the three main branches of Stoic philosophy (physics, logic, and ethics), together with a chapter on psychology and social or political thought. Overall, van Ackeren sees Marcus' core project as an ethical one, though one which draws on relevant aspects of Stoic physics and logic. He also argues that, if we take into account Marcus' ethical aims, the apparently non-Stoic aspects of his thought, regarding psychology or world-view, make better sense.[68] Although van Ackeren examines separately questions of form and philosophical content, his view is that these are, in fact, integrally linked. The distinctive, self-addressed, form that Marcus has evolved is conceived as a vehicle for reflecting on key features of the Stoic philosophical framework and using them as a basis for shaping and guiding his own life.[69]

Thus, van Ackeren' approach is different in several ways from Hadot's. There is a much greater focus on the form of the *Meditations* and the function of this form. He does not see the work as shaped by the idea of three interrelated type of 'spiritual exercise' or by correlated versions of the three branches of Stoic philosophy. Whereas Hadot focuses on the linkage between the *Meditations* and Epictetus, van Ackeren examines in a much more comprehensive way points of contact between Marcus' work and the broader body of Stoic theory.[70] In all these respects, the approach taken here is closer to van Ackeren than Hadot. In the remainder of the Introduction and to a large extent in the Commentary, I am mainly concerned to explore the relationship of the *Meditations* to relevant aspects of Stoicism. However, in discussing individual chapters in the Commentary, I also aim to bring out the extent to which each passage, however brief, has its own internal line of thought and set of connections. Each passage serves as the occasion for a reflective moment, in which Marcus addresses a key theme of Stoic philosophy that can help to form the basis for guiding his life.[71]

I now set out in my own terms what seems to be the core project or framework underlying the *Meditations*. This project has also been outlined at the start of the Introduction, and is discussed in more detail subsequently. There are four main strands.[72] The first is the idea that, over and

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[68] See his treatment of the apparent psychological dualism in *Med.* in van Ackeren 2011: 479–502, and of the 'providence or atoms' theme in 428–43.

[69] See van Ackeren 2011: 25–38, esp. 36, and 698–707.

[70] On the differences between their approaches, see van Ackeren 2011: 354–8, 702–3.

[71] See also the Preliminary Note at the start of the Commentary on Book 2.

[72] For supporting references to the strands outlined here, see the rest of the Introduction.

above the biological or physical and external dimensions of our existence, we should aim to shape our lives as the expression of an ongoing journey towards an ideal state of character and understanding, and mode of inter-personal relationship, which should be our guide and standard even though we will never achieve it fully. This idea derives from certain well-marked features of Stoic ethics, above all, the theory of ethical development as 'appropriation'. The *Meditations* repeatedly evoke key features of this theory, in its personal and social dimensions and in the interplay between these. This idea also forms a dominant underlying framework in other works of Stoic practical ethics, such as Seneca's letters and Epictetus' discourses.[73] But Marcus treats this idea with a special urgency and inten-sity, which derives partly from the unique, self-addressed mode of his work.

The first strand forms the main underpinning framework for the work, with the other three strands deriving from the first one. The second strand is constituted by a set of prominent and interrelated themes. These include death, as a looming and inevitable presence, human, and sometimes cosmic, transience, and the physical dimension of human existence. This may seem to be a collection of ill-assorted motifs; but the common element is that these are unavoidable aspects of our human lives that fall outside the scope of the ongoing project of ethical aspiration and development that forms the first strand. These are features that, as Epictetus might have put it, are not 'up to us', and do not fall within our power as ethical agents,[74] in the same way as the components of the first strand. The two strands are closely connected, however, in that adopting the appropriate attitude to such facts as death (that is, seeing them as 'matters of indifference') forms an integral part of the process of ethical development that is central to the first strand.

The third and fourth strands represent ways in which Marcus explores an area of special importance in Stoic theory, the interface between ethics and logic and, more importantly, physics or the study of nature. Marcus is especially concerned with two ideas which fall within this area. One is that the distinctive features of human (or rational) psychology make us uniquely capable of undertaking the project of ongoing ethical development that makes up the first strand. This theme is also very prominent in Epictetus'

[73] See, on Epictetus, Gill 2006: 380–9; on Seneca, Gill 2009: 80–1; on all three authors, Gill 2012: 385–8.
[74] See e.g. Epict. *Ench.* 1; also Gill 2006: 372, 381–3.

teachings, where it is linked with the idea that what is constitutively human is our *prohairesis*, our capacity for decision or rational agency, which enables us to focus on what is 'up to us'. In the *Meditations*, this theme is couched in terms of the importance of our 'ruling centre' (*hēgemonikon*), sometimes characterized as our inner *daimōn* ('guardian spirit') or 'god'. As in the second strand, this motif is sometimes combined with language which distances the ruling centre from other (purely bodily) aspects of the human being. This kind of language is sometimes taken as marking the (eclectic) adoption of a Platonic approach to psychology. However, I think this is a misleading way to describe Marcus' procedure, which derives from his underlying, and strongly Stoic, ethical project (the first strand), rather than from an independent interest in psychological theory.

The fourth strand broadens the scope of the *Meditations* to the natural universe as a whole. The crucial idea is that the universe forms an ordered, rational, providential framework for the project of ongoing ethical development that Marcus urges on himself in the first strand. In this sense, as he frequently points out, he, like all other human beings, forms an integral part of a larger, informing, whole. This dimension of the work is wholly in line with other sources for Stoic theory. More problematic is his use of the contrast 'providence or atoms', at least in cases where he leaves open the question whether the Stoic providential world-view or the Epicurean atomic one is the true one. This aspect of the *Meditations* is the one that is most puzzling, on the assumption that the work reflects an essentially Stoic framework of thought. But I will suggest that the puzzle diminishes—if it does not wholly disappear—if we hold in view his core ethical concerns, as reflected in the first strand. Broadly speaking, Marcus is looking for reassurance of a cosmic basis for the ethical project to which he is fully committed, and finding it, in spite of some continuing uncertainties.

Marcus' Ethical Outlook

Ethics constitute an area where the *Meditations* come closest to standard Stoic theory. The principal topics treated in the work largely match the headings used by ancient writers to identify the main themes of Stoic ethics. For instance, in one such ancient list we find: impulse (or motivation, *hormē*), good and bad things, the end (or goal, *telos*), primary value and actions, appropriate actions (*kathēkonta*), encouragements and discouragements. This resumé, used by Long and Sedley as the basis for their selection of sources on Stoic ethics, corresponds for the most part with the topics

that figure most prominently in the *Meditations*.[75] Long and Sedley, in the same context, offer a thumbnail sketch of someone living a life shaped by the Stoic ethical principles. The key theme, which informs the other aspects, is the possession of an understanding, character, and way of life that are wholly informed by the recognition that virtue is the only good and the sole proper objective.[76] This sketch and its components largely match the recurrent preoccupations and ideals of the *Meditations*, though Marcus' stance is that of someone aspiring to, or working towards, the character-state and life outlined by Long and Sedley. Within ethics, the main point of contrast between the *Meditations* and mainstream Stoic thought is the absence of the distinction between 'preferred' and 'dispreferred' 'indifferents' (see LS 58). There is also room for debate about quite how to place Marcus' political thinking within Stoic theory on this topic. But these points reflect, to some extent at least, disagreements or shifts of emphasis within the history of Stoic thought.[77] In general, it seems clear that the ethical framework which Marcus assumes is the standard Stoic one.

However, to say this is not yet to define the distinctive way in which Marcus deploys Stoic ethical theory in the *Meditations*. For this purpose, it is useful to discuss more fully the four strands in the work just outlined and their interconnection. I begin with the first strand, which underpins the other three, and discuss the others in subsequent sections. In each case, I note the links with standard Stoic thinking together with any significant points of divergence.

The first strand is the idea of the life of a committed Stoic as an ongoing journey towards an ideal state of character or understanding which, though unrealized, and virtually unrealizable, forms the only valid goal for human aspiration. This idea represents a version of what is sometimes termed moral 'perfectionism'.[78] It has a secure place within Stoic theory and is underpinned by two, seemingly paradoxical or even contradictory, claims. One is that there is a radical gap between the intellectual and ethical condition of the ideal wise person or sage and of all other, non-wise, people.[79]

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[75] See LS 56, esp. A (= D. L. 7.84). On forms of reference used in this book, see Abbreviations and Conventions. Compare the main topics identified in *Med.* by van Ackeren 2011: II.5: end, goods, impulse, passions, appropriate actions; and by Gourinat 2012a: end, starting-points, indifferents, appropriate actions, emotions, virtues, politics, moral improvement.

[76] LS vol. 1: 345.

[77] See further Introd., text to nn. 91–7, 116–22.

[78] On 'moral perfectionism', see Hurka 2006: 364–7.

[79] See LS 61F–J.

The other claim is that, none the less, all human beings are constitutively capable of developing towards, and indeed up to, wisdom, and that this development is natural for them. These claims are supported by salient features of Stoic thinking about ethical epistemology, psychology, and the role of social environment. In broad terms, Stoics believe that all human beings are fundamentally capable of forming a true conception of ethical ideas such as good, in a way that can shape their whole pattern of beliefs and motivation, regardless of the specific social context in which they find themselves.[80] There is a pointed contrast between these ideas and well-marked lines of thought in Plato and Aristotle which were adopted by later (especially Middle Platonic) thinkers such as Plutarch. The contrasting, Platonic-Aristotelian, framework stresses that complete ethical development depends rather on a combination of inborn natural qualities, habituation of character in an appropriate social setting, and, based on these foundations, the acquisition of an understanding of the good through intellectual education.[81]

The picture of ethical life as an ongoing quest is closely linked with the idea of ethical development as 'appropriation' or 'familiarization' (*oikeiōsis*), which was, probably, an innovation of Stoicism and was, certainly, a distinctive and central feature of the theory. The idea involves a number of interconnected claims. One is that animals, including human beings, are naturally disposed to maintain their constitution, rather than to pursue pleasure, as the Epicureans maintained. Another is that adult human beings, as rational animals, are constitutively capable of developing from self-preservation and selection of natural advantages such as health towards the recognition that virtue is the only good; this development is presented as natural, rather than being imposed by social forces. A third claim is that animals, including human beings, are naturally disposed to benefit others of their kind; parental love is offered as a paradigmatic case of this motive. In human beings, this motive is informed by rationality, enabling us to develop towards other-benefiting action and attitude of different kinds. One kind is engagement in family and communal life in our own social context; the other is coming to regard any given human being as a

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[80] See LS 61 K–L, 60 B–F. On the (apparently contradictory) combination of (1) a radical contrast between the wise and foolish and (2) the claim that it is natural to develop towards wisdom, see Inwood and Donini 1999: 717–35, Roskam 2005: 9–10, 15–32.

[81] For this contrast between the two approaches, see Gill 2006: 130–8, also 138–45, 177–82, 231–2, 420–1, 2010a: 221–6: for another version of this contrast, see Roskam 2005 (outlined at 2005: 4–11).

fellow-member of a universal brotherhood or citizenship. Again, this form of development is presented as a natural one, rather than the product of social imposition. We have a number of ancient accounts of these ideas, though we lack any full-scale, theoretical analysis of it. The account in Cicero *On Ends* 3 (*Fin.* 3.17–3.22, 3.62–3.68) is the best known, though we also have discussions by Seneca and Hierocles, as well as a summary of earlier (Hellenistic) thinking by Diogenes Laertius.[82]

The idea of ethical life as an ongoing quest towards an ideal state of character or understanding is pervasive in the *Meditations*. For instance, Marcus repeatedly sets out an ideal of human nature towards which he is working, and refers to the movement towards this ideal as a 'road' or 'path'.[83] Apart from Book 1, the *Meditations* consist largely of a series of self-directed commands or urgings towards this ideal state of mind, which is sometimes characterized in terms used elsewhere to describe Stoic wisdom.[84] Some of Marcus' most characteristic formulations, such as the 'analytic' or 'stripping' method illustrated shortly, are presented as enabling this process. Relevant too is the tone of the *Meditations*, which is, often, urgent and intense, as Marcus presses himself to take forward the process of self-improvement. This passage is typical: 'Do not act as if you were going to live for a thousand years. The inescapable is hanging over your head; while you are alive, while it is still possible, become a good person' (4.17). A related theme is that the time for Marcus to take this project forward is *now*, since life is uncertain in its duration and is rapidly disappearing.[85]

Is the idea of life as an ongoing ethical quest linked by Marcus with the Stoic doctrine of development as 'appropriation'? It might seem, at first glance, that Marcus ignores the latter idea; and it is true that there is no extended treatment of this notion under this heading (*oikeiōsis*), though there are some suggestive uses of the term *oikeios* ('one's own') and its

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[82] For the main sources, see LS 57, 59 D. For discussion, see Engberg-Pedersen 1990, Annas 1993: 159–79, 262–75, Gill 2006: 129–66; also Ramelli 2009 (on the second-century AD thinker Hierocles), and Reydams-Schils 2005: ch. 2, on this topic in Roman philosophy.

[83] See e.g. 2.5, 3.6, 5.9 (ideals of human nature); 4.51, 5.14, 5.34, 6.22 (road or path).

[84] For the last point, see Introd., text to nn. 177–9.

[85] On *Med.* and ongoing quest or progress, see also Roskam 2005: 127–9, 133–4. Hadot's view of *Med.* as 'spiritual exercises' implies the same view: see Roskam 1995: 195–202, 1998: 35–53. Compare van Ackeren's view of *Med.* as 'self-dialogue' focused on self-improvement (Introd., text to nn. 66–7). On the importance of acting 'now' see e.g. 2.4, 2.5.1, 2.6, 2.14, 3.1.3, 3.10.1.

cognates.[86] I think it would be more accurate to say that Marcus focuses on certain aspects of the doctrine, rather than others. To illustrate this point, we can compare Marcus' treatment with the account offered by Cicero, which is subdivided into personal and social appropriation (*Fin.* 3.17–3.22, 3.62–3.68). Marcus does not refer to the more basic or primitive aspects either of personal or social appropriation, which are common to human beings and animals. But he does give close attention to the more advanced, and distinctively human (or rational) aspects of both types of development, which fit much better with his characteristic idiom of ethical self-encouragement. Thus, as regards personal appropriation, Marcus does not deploy the idea of increasingly rational selection between different natural advantages, such as health or property, which is presented by Cicero as the main means of ethical progress. Rather, he focuses on the final, climactic, stage, the recognition that virtue is the only good and proper object of choice, in comparison with which all other so-called goods are 'matters of indifference'.[87] Analogously, in the social dimension of 'appropriation', Marcus does not stress the fact that the motive to benefit others is in-built, in a basic form, in all animals, as exhibited by parental love. The focus falls on two more advanced features of social development, namely considered engagement in social roles (both familial and communal) and coming to regard other human beings as one's brothers or fellow-citizens.[88] The aspects of the Stoic theory that Marcus does include are very well-marked features of the *Meditations*.[89] Hence, the work is strongly informed by the Stoic analysis of ethical development, though in a selective way.[90]

It is sometimes suggested that Marcus' selective treatment of the theme of appropriation, along with related features of the *Meditations*, reflects the influence of the early Stoic, Aristo, whose views came to be regarded as unorthodox within the school. Aristo adopted what one might call a 'hard'

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[86] For some suggestive uses of such terms, see e.g. 1.6.5, 3.2.6, 3.9.2, 4.1.2, 4.45, 5.14, 5.20, 6.19. See also Gourinat 2012a: 422–3.

[87] See Cic. *Fin.* 3.20–3.22 (=LS 59 D(2–6)). The passage has been examined intensively by scholars; on competing readings, see Gill 2006: 145–66.

[88] See Cic. *Fin.* 3.62–3.68 (=LS 57 F); for these two aspects, see, respectively, *Fin.* 3.62–3.63, 3.64–3.66, 3.68. The *Meditations* do refer to the quality of natural affection (*philostorgia*), closely linked in Stoic theory with parental love (see final note in Comm. on 1.11), but without specific reference to the early stages of social appropriation.

[89] See e.g. (evoking the outcome of personal appropriation) 3.7, 3.11.2, 3.11.4, 3.12, 3.49.4–3.49.6, 5.9.3–5.9.4, 5.15; (evoking the outcome of both strands of appropriation) 3.4.4, 3.4.7, 3.6, 10.1.1, 10.1.4; (evoking the outcome of social appropriation) 2.16, 4.4.1, 4.3.4, 5.16.3–5.16.4, 6.23.

[90] See also Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 29–31.

version of the Stoic ethical position: he refused to recognize the significance of the distinction between naturally 'preferable' and 'dispreferable' indifferents and defined virtue solely in terms of 'indifference'. He also rejected the idea that specific forms of guidance were useful in ethical education, maintaining that general principles alone were needed to provide the basis for virtue.[91] In the *Meditations*, Marcus, similarly, ignores the distinction between 'preferable' and 'dispreferable' distinctions and the related idea that ethical development consists in progressively more accurate 'selection' of natural advantages such as health or property. Marcus also, although providing himself with much ethical advice, does so at a very general level, rather than offering the more detailed and socially particularized advice we find in some versions of Stoic theorizing.[92] So it might seem that Marcus' selective treatment of the theme of ethical development reflects adherence to the position of Aristo, rather than the mainstream version of Stoic theory established by Zeno and Chrysippus.[93]

We know from an early letter by Marcus that he was profoundly affected by Aristo's writings, and that he found there a powerful call to self-improvement.[94] Also, the *Meditations* were strongly influenced by Epictetus' *Discourses*, which also (largely) ignore the notion of 'preferables' and the idea that ethical development consists in selection between natural advantages. Epictetus too has been seen as influenced by Aristo in this respect.[95] It is possible that Marcus' practice is affected by his reading of Aristo, though I doubt that he uses the *Meditations* as a way of defining a specific theoretical position within Stoic ethics. Another move made by Aristo was to focus entirely on ethics, and to dismiss the value of logic and physics. Although ethics are much more central to the *Meditations* than logic or physics, there is little in Marcus' thought that indicates a root-and-branch rejection of these areas of knowledge.[96] Marcus' lack of interest in

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[91] For the main evidence, see LS 58 E–G, I, 66 I–J.

[92] Contrast, e.g., the presentation of detailed and socially embedded guidance (including casuistry) in Cicero, *On Duties* (based on Panaetius' *On Appropriate Actions*), esp. book 2, which deals with advantages, or 'preferables', or in Seneca, *On Benefits*. On this side of Stoic theory, see Inwood 1999.

[93] See Roskam 2005: 131–5, and forthcoming 2013; also van Ackeren 2011: 629–33, 685–6.

[94] See Comm. on 1.7.

[95] See Roskam 2005: 112–14, van Ackeren 2011: 633–4; however, as they acknowledge, Epictetus' position is not clear-cut on this point. On Epictetus' position, see also Long 2002: 182–5, 201–2.

[96] See *SVF* 1.351–1.357; on Marcus' attitude to these other branches of knowledge, see the two last sections of this Introd.

the notion of 'preferables' is perhaps better explained by reference to his overall approach in this work. It can be linked with his selective treatment of the theory of development as 'appropriation'. Marcus stresses the desired end-point of ethical development, including recognizing the absolute value of virtue and seeing all other humans as brothers, ideas which represent for him powerful sources of inspiration or aspiration. The earlier stages of development (selection between 'preferable' advantages) are ignored by him as less relevant for his project of self-improvement.[97] Thus, Marcus' lack of attention to 'preferables' and to specific social advice may reflect his mode of ethical self-guidance, rather than expressing a considered theoretical stance.

To illustrate the style in which Marcus, typically, refers to the theme of appropriation and the ethical standpoint of the *Meditations* generally, it is useful to consider closely one passage (3.11), which is often taken as a characteristic example of his approach.[98] Although my main concern here is the link with the Stoic theory of development as appropriation, the passage also illustrates other characteristic features of Marcus' approach considered shortly.

[11] (1) To the preceding pieces of advice, one more should be added: always make a definition or delineation of whatever presents itself to your mind, so that you can see distinctly what sort of thing it is when stripped down to its essence as a whole and in all its parts, and tell yourself its proper name, and the name of the elements from which it has been put together and into which it will be dissolved. (2) Nothing is so effective in creating greatness of mind as being able to examine methodically and truthfully everything that presents itself in life, and always viewing things in such a way as to consider what kind of function this particular thing contributes to what kind of universe and what value it has for the whole universe and for the human beings who are citizens of the highest city, of which other cities are, as it were, mere households; (3) and what this object is that presently makes an impression on me, and what it is composed of and how long in the nature of things it will persist, and what virtue is needed to respond to it, such as gentleness, courage, truthfulness, good faith, simplicity, self-sufficiency, and so on. (4) So, in each case, you should say: this has come from god, this from the coordination and interweaving of the threads of fate and similar kinds of coincidence and chance, this from one of my own kind, a relative and companion, but one who does not know what is natural for him. (5) But I do know and so I treat him kindly and justly according to the natural law of companionship, though aiming at the same time at what he deserves with regard to the things that are morally neutral.

This passage brings together two kinds of language which recur in the *Meditations*, and which are sometimes combined: that of analysis or definition, breaking things down to their component parts,[99] and that of 'stripping' things so as who them naked.[100] Despite the use of two different kinds of expression, Marcus seems to have in mind the same process, namely getting to the ethical core of a given situation, though in a way that involves two aspects. One is viewing each situation, as it presents itself, as an opportunity for trying to express an appropriate kind of virtue ('such as gentleness, courage, etc.', 3.11.3). This process is also presented as 'effective in creating greatness of mind' (3.11.2). The theme of expressing virtue is closely linked with regarding other human beings as fellow-citizens of the universe or as one's relatives or 'companions' (3.11.4). The other aspect of the process is recognizing the material elements from which we are composed and into which we (like everything else) will at some point dissolve; elsewhere these are presented as inferior aspects of our nature, but not therefore ones we can wholly evade or ignore. Although these are, on the face of it, quite different points, they are presented by Marcus as correlated and in some sense mutually supporting. Underlying distinctions, which help to make sense of this combination, include those between virtue and 'indifferents' and between what does not and does not lie within our power as ethical agents. What is involved, in part at least, is 'stripping' away the reputation and appeal of 'indifferents' such as health and wealth, which are linked with the body or material aspects of our life, and revealing the ethical essence of the situation, which is the scope it gives us as agents for exercising the virtues.[101] The themes exemplified in this chapter can be connected with other recurrent features of the *Meditations*, including the contrast between the 'causal' and 'material' aspects of existence.[102] More broadly, the passage illustrates the relationship Marcus sees between (what

[99] See esp. 'definition and delineation . . . as a whole and in its parts', 3.11.1; 'examine methodically and truthfully', 3.11.2; 'what this object is . . . and what it is composed of', 3.11.3. Marcus' language is strikingly technical, evoking Stoic accounts of definition (e.g. D. L. 7.60); for a detailed study of the language of the passage, see Giavatto 2008: 5–15. Compare 2.12.3, 10.11, 11.2.2, 11.16; also Hadot 1995: 187–9.

[100] See esp. 'stripped down to its essence . . . the name of the elements from which it has been put together and into which it will be dissolved', 3.11.1; 'what this object is . . . and what it is composed of and how long in the nature of things it will persist', 3.11.3. Compare 6.13, 12.2, also (more briefly) 8.24, 9.36. See also Hadot 1998: 164–6.

[101] The relevance of the virtue-indifferents distinction is brought out more clearly in 11.16.

[102] See e.g. 4.21.4, 7.29, 12.29.

I am presenting as) two main strands in the work, the core project of ethical self-improvement and coming to terms with the transient nature of human existence, above all, one's own death.[103]

My main concern here is to bring out the linkage between this passage and the Stoic theory of development as appropriation. Marcus' treatment here reflects his selective presentation of the theory, discussed earlier. As regards personal development, Marcus' general focus is not on the process of rational selection between natural advantages but on the final stage of recognizing the absolute value and desirability of virtue, by contrast with which other things are seen as 'matters of indifference'. So here, the process of 'stripping' situations to their essentials consists, in part, in conceiving any given situation as a means of seeking to express virtues 'such as gentleness, courage, truthfulness' (3.11.3). The contrast with the conventional valuation of things such as health as good is signalled in the final sentence of the chapter (3.11.5).[104] The passage also reflects Marcus' general treatment of the social dimension of development, which does not focus on the instinctive desire to benefit others of one's kind, which is shared by humans and other animals and manifested in parental love. Marcus accentuates here one aspect of the outcome of this development, namely coming to regard any given human being as a fellow-citizen of the universe and as a member of the brotherhood of humankind.[105] Thus, the passage indicates that Marcus focuses on those aspects of Stoic theory that best match the project of rational, self-guided aspiration that lies at the heart of the *Meditations*, rather than reporting or expounding Stoic doctrine in a complete form for its own sake.

There is a further interesting corollary of the connection between this passage and accounts of the Stoic theory of development. A feature of our evidence for the Stoic theory sometimes noted is the absence of explicit theoretical analysis of the relationship between the two aspects of development, personal and social. It is difficult to know whether this gap was addressed in some text not available to us now or whether there is some more fundamental reason for its absence.[106] However, it is characteristic of

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[103] See Introd., text to nn. 153–7.

[104] Compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.21 (=LS 59 D(4–5)).

[105] See 'citizens of the highest city, of which other cities are . . . mere households' (3.11.2) and 'this from one of my own kind, a relative and companion' (3.11.4). Compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.64 (= LS 57 F(4–5) (which falls in Cicero's account of social appropriation in *Fin.* 3.62–3.68), also Plu. *Mor.* 329 A–B (=LS 67 A). For comparison between Marcus' treatment of appropriation (both strands) and Cicero's account, see Introd., text to nn. 87–90.

[106] For differing responses to this point, see Inwood 1983: 193–9, 1984: 179–83, Annas 1993: 275–6, Ramelli 2009: lxiii–iv.

the practically oriented approach we find in Epictetus and Marcus to underline the integral linkage between these two dimensions of ethical development. In 3.11, for instance, the two aspects are juxtaposed in a way that implies that the two kinds of development run in parallel with each other and reinforce each other. The final sentence of the chapter (3.11.5) is especially suggestive: 'But I do know and so I treat him kindly and justly according to the natural law of companionship, though aiming at the same time at what he deserves with regard to the things that are morally neutral.'[107] Two points seem to be implied here. One is that treating someone 'kindly and justly' (that is, virtuously) goes hand in hand with conceiving such people as fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind. The other, more subtle, point is that one's own progress in understanding the absolute value of virtue does not rule out recognizing the claims of other people to what they are entitled regarding things such as health or property, even though these things are now understood by the agent as 'matters of indifference' in comparison with virtue.[108] Thus, it seems that writings such as the *Meditations* (or Epictetus' oral teachings) were seen as means by which to explore the relationship between these two key aspects of ethical development, at least in terms of the working out of this relationship in practical life.[109]

This passage also illustrates a related feature of the work, namely, stress on the importance of the social and political dimension of human life. Although this side of the *Meditations* is not always fully acknowledged,[110] it forms a substantial element and manifests itself in a series of themes, all of which strongly reflect standard Stoic thinking. One motif is Marcus' repeated use of the combination of terms 'rational and sociable' (or 'political') to characterize the distinctive features of human nature.[111] Another is

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[107] 'Morally neutral' translates *ta mesa*, literally, 'intermediate things' (not virtue or vice); for the use of this term to mean 'indifferents', see 5.36.1, 6.45.3, 11.10.4, also D. L. 7.105 and Cicero's use of 'middle duties' (*media officia*) in *Off.* 3.14–3.15.

[108] For this stance towards other people, see also 9.27 (attributed to the gods), also 1.8.7, 5.6, 5.36; on the type of attitude involved, see Introd., text to nn. 135–9. For this reading of the passage, see also Farquharson 1944: 581.

[109] See further (also on Epictetus), Gill 2000: 608–11, 613–15; also e.g. *Med.* 2.16, 3.4, 3.6, 5.20, 5.36, 6.41.

[110] For full and helpful treatments, see van Ackeren 2011: 502–53; Reydams-Schils 2012a and 2012b.

[111] See e.g. 3.7.4, 5.29.2, 5.16.3, 6.14.2. On language as a link between the standard Stoic linkage of 'rational' and 'sociable' as distinctively human characteristics, see Gill 2006: 140–1, referring to Cic. *Off.* 1.11–1.14.

the presentation of the city or community, whether human or cosmic ('the city of gods and humans') as a key part of the normative framework for shaping ethical life.[112] A third, just exemplified, is repeated, though selective, reference to Stoic thinking about the social aspect of ethical development as 'appropriation'.[113] It is also striking just how often Marcus reflects on the ethics of interpersonal behaviour, in ways that are sometimes both subtle and acute; this is also a strong vein in his comments on exemplary individuals in Book 1.[114] Many of these passages exhibit the rather complex, asymmetrical relationship to other people characterized later as 'objective' rather than 'reactive'. But this attitude should not be taken as showing lack of concern for other people, or, in a sense, lack of affective engagement with them.[115]

What about Marcus' political thinking? Although his comments on this topic are sparing, especially outside Book 1, the question of his political ideals takes on a special interest given his status as emperor. First of all, how far can his thinking be located within mainstream Stoic political theory? This is a difficult question to answer, because of the incomplete nature of our evidence and the interpretative puzzles posed by the material. On the face of it, there is a marked discontinuity between an early, radical or utopian phase of Stoic theory, and a later phase or phases in which Stoic thinkers accommodated their ideals more closely to the conventional frameworks of Greek and Roman social and political life. We are told that the *Republic* of Zeno, founder of Stoicism, offered a kind of ideal constitution (like Plato's *Republic*), a 'city of the wise', unified by internal love, but excluding normal civic institutions and social conventions. Later Stoic thinking, however, while also deploying radical and innovative concepts, such as 'citizenship of the universe' and 'brotherhood of humankind', uses these as regulative ideals or norms to guide life lived within the normal framework of social and political communities.[116] Also, within this second vein of Stoic thought, we find more or less conventional or idealistic (even counter-cultural) strands; we also find debate about how far adherence to Stoic ideals requires a higher than normal standard of behaviour in buying and selling, for instance.[117] Much recent scholarship has focused on the

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[112] See e.g. 3.11.2, 4.4, 10.1.4 (also Comm. on 4.4); compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.64.

[113] See Introd., n. 89 (second set of refs.).

[114] See e.g. 3.4, 5.6, 5.31, 5.36, 6.20; also 1.8–1.9, 1.14–1.15.

[115] See Introd., text to nn. 135–9.

[116] For the main evidence, see LS 67.

[117] Cynicism (or an idealized version of Cynicism) was sometimes used as a way of characterizing more radical versions of Stoic socio-political theory. For Stoic debate about the ethics of buying and selling, see Cic. *Off.* 3.50–3.57.

question whether there were indeed, as the sources seem to show, distinct
and divergent phases in Stoic thinking or whether there was an underlying
unity of theory which has been partly obscured by the nature of our
evidence. It has been suggested that, in the political thinking of Chrysippus,
and perhaps even Zeno, the idea of the 'city of the wise' should be seen, like
later ideals such as the 'brotherhood of humankind', as norms for aspiration
by people living lives of social engagement within conventional contexts.[118]

Whatever the position was in earlier Stoic thought, the viewpoint
assumed in the *Meditations* seems quite clear, and is similar to that found in
previous works on Stoic practical ethics in this period. While Marcus often
adopts general regulative ideals such as the citizenship of the universe or
brotherhood of humankind (as in 3.11.2), he also advises himself in terms
which evoke his specific social role, urging himself to behave 'as suits a
Roman and a man' (2.5.1) or as a 'statesman, a Roman, and a ruler' (3.5.2).
The two ideals are sometimes combined in a way that alludes to the Stoic
ideal of 'dual citizenship:[119] 'As Antoninus, my city and fatherland is Rome,
as a human being it is the universe. It is only what benefits these cities
which is good for me' (6.44.5). The underlying thought seems to be that one
should aim to achieve the highest ideals of Stoic social ethics (being a
citizen of the universe) by complete and consistent engagement with one's
localized social role, which was, in Marcus' case, being the Roman
emperor.[120] Consistent with this approach is Marcus' explicit rejection of
utopian political change (characterized as hoping for 'Plato's *Republic*'),
and his commendation in Book 1 of a specifically Roman, quasi-Republican,
though still recognizably imperial, model of government.[121] Marcus' affili-
ation with his local role is accompanied by two provisos. One is that he
should aim to model himself on the (ethically) best examples of those
people who have fulfilled that role; in Marcus' case, the main model is his
adoptive father, Antoninus Pius. Second, he should play the role in a way

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[118]   The position of Chrysippus is especially puzzling since he is associated in our sources
both with the more utopian aspect of Stoic theory, in his *Republic* (LS 67 F–G) and the more
conventional (LS 57 F(7–8)). See, on the one hand, stressing discontinuity in Stoic thought,
Schofield 1991; and on the other, arguing for an underlying unity of theory, Vogt 2008: chs.
1–2.*Vogt's position is partly anticipated by Vander Waerdt 1991, 1994, Annas 1993: 302–12.
On the scholarly debate, see van Ackeren 2011: 512–14, 519–21.

[119]   For this ideal, see also Epict. *Diss.* 2.5.26; Sen. *De Otio* 4.1 (= LS 67 K).

[120]   For this view, see Brunt 1975: 21–4, Gill 2000: 613–14; see further van Ackeren 2011:
540–5, reviewing possible interpretations of 6.44.

[121]   See 9.29.5 and 1.14 (taken with Comm. on 1.14.2, second note); also Reydams-Schils
2005: 84–9, 2012b: 439–42.

that avoids corruption by its external advantages or social trappings: this means, for Marcus, not being 'turned into a Caesar or stained with the purple'.[122] Implicit in these qualifications, and in his general treatment of this theme, is the aim of coordinating personal with social 'appropriation' as conceived in the Stoic theory of ethical development. Thus, the goal is to act out one's specific social role in a way that is consistent both with the proper valuation of virtue, rather than indifferents, and with treating other human beings properly, that is, as fellow-citizens of the universe or 'relatives', as indicated in 3.11.2, 3.11.4–3.11.5.

Marcus' conception of his political ideal, as expressed in the *Meditations*, is relevant to the question sometimes raised, how far his own political practice matched, or was influenced by, his philosophical principles. Scholars have reached very different conclusions on this question. Sometimes his legislative activity has been seen as showing an unusually humane stance, for instance, as regards women, slaves, and children, and this has been attributed to his Stoic principles.[123] On the other hand, it has been argued that Marcus' decision to appoint his surviving son Commodus as his successor (despite weaknesses of character that made him a disastrous emperor) showed a thoroughly conventional approach to key political decisions.[124] By its nature, this is bound to be a complex question with scope for competing considerations.[125] But it is crucial to consider it against the background of Marcus' own view of the implications of Stoic political thinking. Judging from the *Meditations*, what we would expect is that Marcus would aim to play his political role as emperor, conceived more or less in traditional terms, but in a way that was compatible with his underlying, Stoicism-informed, project of trying to lead an ethically good life. We would not expect Marcus' view of Stoicism to lead to attempts at major social change or to an innovative version of the imperial role.

Two very thorough analyses suggest that this was, indeed, how Marcus acted out his role as emperor. The outcome of Peter Brunt's detailed assessment of Marcus' response to the Christians (more precisely, his guidance of his governors' practice) is that his procedure followed the guidelines of earlier emperors, especially Trajan.[126] A full examination of Marcus'

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[122] See 6.30.1, also 1.16 (taken with Comm., on these passages); also Gill 2012b: 52–8, Reydams-Schils 2012a: 111, 118–21, and 2012b: 437–9.
[123] See Noyen 1955.
[124] See Stanton 1969.
[125] See also Henrickx 1974; de Blois 2012.
[126] See Brunt 1979: 507–10.

treatment of slaves in his legal rescripts by Martin Avenarius indicates that this represented a more humane version of current practice rather than marking the introduction of a new approach shaped by philosophical thinking.[127] More broadly, given the extreme pressure that Marcus was under for most of his period as emperor—in particular, facing the intense and real threat to the stability of the empire by the German invasions—just fulfilling the standard imperial role, in an effective and generally humane way, may have seemed to Marcus the best possible way of expressing his life-project as a Stoic.[128] Although this might seem a rather modest outcome of the influence of Stoic ethics on Marcus, the counter-example of many other emperors, including Marcus' own son Commodus, suggest that Stoicism in this respect actually played a very valuable role both for Marcus and the Roman empire.[129]

Another ethical subject on which Marcus' approach reflects, and illustrates, the standard Stoic approach is that of emotions or passions (*pathē*). Stoic thinking on emotions has often been criticized, in antiquity and modern times; but some recent scholarship has underlined the coherence and credibility of their theory. It is crucial, I think, to recognize that their conception of emotions is unified or 'holistic', rather than intellectualist. Emotions, as in some modern cognitivist theories, are conceived as psycho-physical events which depend on the agent's beliefs, specifically beliefs about what is good or bad. The kind of emotions we experience are shaped by our overall belief-set and ethical state; ethical development brings with it a change in the content and affective quality of our emotions, as we move from emotions based on misguided conceptions of value towards the 'good emotions' (*eupatheiai*) of the wise person.[130] Marcus' presentation of emotions reflects these features.[131] His treatment of emotions forms an integral part of the project of deliberate ethical development that is central

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[127] Avenarius 2012.

[128] On Marcus' rule and the German invasions, see Introd., text to nn. 11–12. The extremity of the threat may serve to explain the very violent (and markedly *in*-humane) presentation of the Germans on Marcus' victory column, as suggested by Beckman 2011: 194–206, 2012: 260–1.

[129] See Gill 2012b: 52–8.

[130] See (on all these aspects) Graver 2008, Gill 2010b; and (on the 'holism' of the theory) Gill 2006: 244–66, 2010a: 202–14. See also Inwood 1985: ch. 5, Brennan 1998, 2003. On parallels with modern cognitivist theories of emotion, see Nussbaum 2001: chs. 1–2. For evidence for the Stoic theory, see LS 65.

[131] Van Ackeren 2011: 655–69 stresses the connections with standard Stoic thinking (see also 2011: 669–79, responding to criticisms of the Stoic theory). Engberg-Pedersen 1998 also does so, though on the basis of an unusual reading of salient features of Marcus' approach.

to the *Meditations* and reflects the focus on the scope for exercise of agency that is typical of his approach. He stresses not only that the emotions we feel necessarily express our value-judgements, but also that we can prevent (bad) emotions by refusing to add, inappropriately, the judgement that this or that experience is good or bad.[132] He also stresses that we can exercise agency to produce—or at least work towards—'good emotions' and related states. In fact, despite the impression often formed that the *Meditations* are pessimistic in tone, the work is unusually rich in its vocabulary for positive emotional states that are in line with ethically sound judgements and attitudes.[133] Although the focus is on change in value-judgements, Marcus does not ignore the affective or experiential dimension of emotions, which also forms part of standard Stoic theory.[134]

The Stoic theory has often been seen as expressing a detached, even inhumane or heartless, attitude towards other people. The previous discussion of Stoic thinking on social and political engagement, as reflected in the *Meditations*, should help to remove this impression. Marcus' work also illustrates the nature of Stoic thinking on the emotional dimension of interpersonal life. This can be brought out by referring to Peter Strawson's distinction between 'reactive' and 'objective' attitudes.[135] As Marcus illustrates, Stoicism does, indeed, aim to produce detachment from many of the emotions (or 'reactive attitudes') often generated within interpersonal relationships, such as anger and grief, which Stoics see as based on false conceptions of what really matters.[136] Following Epictetus, Marcus also stresses that our affection for other people needs to acknowledge the unavoidable (natural) fact of the physical vulnerability and mortality of loved ones and of ourselves.[137] But Marcus also reflects the fact that Stoic theory promotes other kinds of emotional response, including certain kinds of love and admiration, which are in line with well-grounded value-judgements.[138] Since most people, as Stoics are well aware, have emotions or reactive attitudes based on misguided beliefs, our treatment of other people needs to acknowledge—without mirroring—this response. This

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[132] See e.g. 2.2.4, 7.14, 8.28, 11.18.11.

[133] See e.g. 4.31, 6.48, 10.1, 12.36.4–12.36,5. See also Engberg-Pedersen 1998: 307–8, 322–6, van Ackeren 2011: 664–6.

[134] See van Ackeren 2011: 670–2; on affect in Stoic theory, see Graver 2008: 28–34, 51–3.

[135] For this comparison, see Gill 2003a and 2006: 450 (also Strawson 1974).

[136] See e.g. 6.6, 6.20, 7.22, 7.65

[137] See 8.49, alluding to Epict. *Diss.* 3.24.84–3.24.88; on Epictetus' view of emotions (largely shared by Marcus), see Long 2002: 244–54.

[138] See e.g. 2.5.1, 7.22, 6.48.

leads to a rather complex, indirect response to (most) other people, which is similar to Strawson's 'objective' attitude, and this indirectness may give the impression of detachment or coldness. But Marcus indicates the humanity of approach underlying this response, while also underlining the need not to be drawn into unconsidered reactive attitudes oneself.[139]

Confronting Death and Transience

So far, I have focused on what I see as Marcus' core project in the *Meditations*, namely carrying forward a programme of ethical self-guidance and self-improvement, conceived in Stoic terms. I have suggested that this project underlies and informs the other three strands in the work. The second strand is Marcus' treatment of a set of features which represent, on the face of it, more negative aspects of human life, but which, I think, are underpinned by a positive approach. These themes do not form part of Stoic ethics, as normally understood; but they do contribute to Marcus' overall ethical outlook, as expressed in the *Meditations*. There are three main interlocking themes: death, the transitory nature of human life, transience in nature (though combined with the idea of cosmic cycles or eternal recurrence), and the purely physical or material aspects of human existence.

These themes form a prominent and distinctive aspect of the *Meditations*. Death is the subject of more than 60 chapters.[140] This motif overlaps with that of life's transience and the passing of whole groups of people.[141] A related theme is the transience of everything in nature;[142] this idea co-exists with the idea of eternal recurrence, that everything is repeated in cosmic cycles. The latter idea is compatible with constant transience within cycles, even though events are repeated in a broader, cosmic scale.[143] Another motif is the vivid depiction of the purely physical dimension of human life, especially experiences or items normally seen as luxurious or exciting.[144] Often,

[139] See e.g. 2.1, 3.4.7–3.4.9, 5.36, 6.27, 11.18.15–11.18.23. Strawson's examples of 'objective' attitudes are the responses of parent to child or psychiatrist to patient. See further Gill 2003a: 210–13, 2006: 451–2; also Engberg-Pedersen 1998: 330–4.

[140] For a full list, see Brunt 1975: 20. See List of main themes in *Med.* 2–6. Hence, the claim of Rutherford (1989: 167) that 'the greatest power in the hierarchy of Marcus' thought is . . . the all-encompassing power of death'.

[141] See e.g. 4.35, 4.48.2, 8.21, 9.33; see further Rutherford 1989: 161–7.

[142] See e.g. 4.43, 5.23, 6.36.

[143] See e.g. 2.14, 5.13, 10.7, 11.1.

[144] See e.g. 5.10, 6.13, 8.24, 8.38, 9.36.

though not always, these themes figure as the only or main topic of any given chapter; and this has sometimes led scholars to take them in isolation from Marcus' general ethical approach. They have been interpreted as striking indicators of the attitude of pessimism sometimes seen as characteristic of the *Meditation* or, in a bizarre variant, as the product of drug-induced melancholia.[145] A related line of explanation, which sometimes overlaps with ascribing pessimism to Marcus, is to find in such themes the influence of non-Stoic thinkers and theories and to take them as indications of Marcus' philosophically eclectic approach. Thus, the theme of transience is taken to show the influence of Heraclitus; distaste for the physical is thought to show the influence of Plato; the view of death as a universal leveller and blunt 'plain speaking' (*parrhēsia*) about physicality is taken as marking the presence of Cynicism.[146]

The question whether these and other theories influenced Marcus' thought in the *Meditations*, and if so, in what way, is pursued later.[147] It is worth noting that the theories seen as influential in the *Meditations* are all ones that played a significant role in shaping Stoicism as a whole.[148] But also important is the fact that these themes are either recognizable features of Stoic theory or are treated in a way that reflects Stoic thinking. For instance, the idea of eternal recurrence (that all events occur in repeated cycles between periodic cosmic conflagrations) is a standard Stoic idea.[149] Also, Marcus' treatment of death reflects regular features of Stoic theory, such as that length of life is irrelevant to human happiness or that death is not in itself a bad thing. The salient underlying point is that such factors are 'matters of indifference' in comparison with virtue which is the only basis for happiness and the only thing which is 'good' in a strong sense.[150] Further, Marcus' treatment of death reflects Stoic approaches to the

[145] For a sophisticated version of the pessimistic reading, see Rutherford 1989: 231–55, centred on a contrast with Epictetus. For a critical discussion of psychoanalytic or drug-based interpretations of Marcus' supposed pessimism, see Hadot 1995: 180–4.

[146] See e.g. on Heraclitus, Rutherford 1989: 249; Rist 1983: 37–9, 2246–8; on Platonic influence, Rutherford 1989: 240–1; Asmis 1989: 2239–40; on Cynicism, Rutherford 1989: 22, 242–3. See also on possible Cynic influence on Marcus, Desmond 2008: 72–3; and on the theme of death as a leveller, Desmond 2008: 65–7. On the question of eclecticism in Marcus, see Introd., text to nn. 24–30.

[147] See Introd., text to nn. 195–211 and 242–68.

[148] On the influence of Socrates/Plato and Heraclitus, see Long 1996: chs. 1–2; on that of Plato, see Gill 2006: 15–20; on that of Cynicism, see Desmond 2008: 48–52, 148–53.

[149] See LS 52 (including *Med.* 2.14 as passage H).

[150] See van Ackeren 2011: 167–72; on these Stoic ideas, see also Gill 2006: 88, referring to Cic. *Fin.* 3.46, 3.76. On virtue and 'indifference', see Introd., text to nn. 91–7.

therapy of emotions, or to consolation, which are themselves overlapping genres of writing.[151] As Cicero brings out in his review of therapeutic and consolatory strategies in *Tusculans* 3–4, Stoics drew on a range of ideas, which are partly shared with other philosophical movements. These include preparing for (what are normally seen as) future disasters (*praeparatio futurorum malorum*), a strategy shared with the Cyrenaics, and removing the belief that one has an ethical obligation to grieve for the dead, a motif shared with the Epicureans. But what underlies both these moves, in the case of Stoicism, is the belief that death in itself is not a bad thing.[152] Hence, we can infer, behind Marcus' treatment of these themes, the implied presence of Stoic approaches to emotional therapy and the ethical principles on which these are based.

However, the most substantial reason for thinking that Marcus approaches these themes from his normal, Stoic, standpoint is that, in a number of passages, they are explicitly linked with this approach. In 3.11, for instance, discussed earlier, the analytic or 'stripping' method consists of two linked aspects. These are focusing on the ethical core of any given situation (the scope given for trying to express virtue), and recognizing that we do so as transient psychophysical entities and as an integral part of the natural world.[153] These aspects are often linked in this way in the *Meditations.* This linkage between the core ethical project and the themes of death, transience, and physicality, carries two further implications. One is the idea stressed from the start of this introduction, namely that, over and above our physical or biological movement from cradle to grave, human beings can make their lives into the expression of an ethical project of ongoing ethical aspiration or self-improvement. Marcus, in juxtaposing these two strands in his thought, sometimes highlights the contrast between the mortal transience and physicality we cannot control and the ethical objectives which depend on our agency.[154] In other passages, he stresses that our ethical project is taken forward, in part at least, *by recognizing and accepting* the inevitability of our physical transience, without

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[151] See van Ackeren 2011: 151–4, 157–64.

[152] See Cic. *Tusc.* 3.52 (also 3.28–3.31), 3.76–3.77 (compare 4.59–4.62). On Epicurean thinking on death (treated very selectively in Cic. *Tusc.* 3), see LS 24, esp. E, discouraging grief, also Warren 2004. See further, on Stoic therapeutic therapies, Sorabji 2000: 175–80, Gill 2010a: 290–3, 2013b.

[153] See Introd., text to 99–103; also Hadot 1995: 182–9, who sees a similar significance in the juxtaposition of the two strands.

[154] See e.g. 6.47, 12.3.

treating this as negating the validity of our aspirations. We express our agency or try to exercise virtues (such as courage or 'greatness of mind', *megalophrosunē*), in part by acknowledging that we do so as transitory psychophysical entities, whose life-span and location within nature is, to a large extent, not 'up to us'.[155] It is notable, and poignant, that this theme is especially prominent in Book 12, which may have been the last written by Marcus, especially the final chapter.[156] The recognition of these two crucial dimensions of human existence is expressed elsewhere in the *Meditations*, in connection with Marcus' thinking about human psychology and the larger cosmos. But it is also a recognition which arises naturally from the distinctive vision of human life offered by Stoicism as a whole. As I have suggested elsewhere, distinctive of Stoicism is a combination of ethical rigour or aspiration (of a kind that strongly evokes Socrates or Plato) and naturalism (especially seeing ourselves as psychophysical organisms within the natural universe).[157] In his juxtaposition of these two strands in his ethical outlook, Marcus makes sense for himself of these two dimensions of Stoicism, as he does in other ways considered shortly.

Ethics and Other Branches of Philosophy: Psychology

Two other distinctive and prominent features of the thought of the *Meditations* are Marcus' reflections about human psychology and the natural universe, which I presented earlier as the third and fourth strands in the thought of the work.[158] Marcus approaches these topics very much from an ethical standpoint. More precisely, he reflects upon them as part of his core ethical project of ongoing self-improvement or aspiration. One concern seems to be to reassure himself that he, like other human beings, has the kind of psychological make-up and resources that make this project a feasible one. Another is to reaffirm that his life, or human life in general, is located in a natural or cosmic framework that gives a broader significance and objective basis to this ethical project. On the whole, on both topics, Marcus finds the kind of reassurance he is looking for, though with residual uncertainties about the natural universe, which are

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[155] For 'greatness of mind' in Marcus, used in this way, see e.g. 3.11.2, 10.11.1. For the Epictetan theme of focusing on what is 'up to us', see Introd., text to n. 74.

[156] See 12.23, 12.24, 12.32, 12.36 (final chapter), also 2.17. On the form and composition of *Med.*, in so far as we know anything about this, see Introd., text to nn. 3–8.

[157] See Gill 2006: 3–4, 74–100, 2013a: 98–9.

[158] See Introd., 'Is There a Core Project', two final paragraphs.

expressed especially in some of his reflections on alternative world-views ('providence or atoms').

These topics are ones on which Marcus has sometimes been seen as holding views that are non-standard within Stoicism and that express an eclectic intellectual standpoint. It is sometimes suggested that he adopts a Platonic, or at least Platonizing, view of human psychology, that he tries to bridge Epicurean and Stoic thinking on the natural universe, and that he may be confused about the implications of trying to form this bridge.[159] I think that the extent to which the *Meditations* are non-standard in terms of Stoic thinking in this respect has been exaggerated.[160] On psychology, I believe the Platonizing aspect is limited to the mode of expression and that Marcus' main (moral) point is fully in line with Stoic thinking. On the ethical significance of the natural universe, his views are largely consistent with earlier Stoic thinking, even in most of the passages in which he poses the alternative, 'providence or atoms', despite a few exceptional passages. However, to provide an appropriate framework for this topic, we need to consider the general character of earlier Stoic thinking on the interface of ethics, logic, and physics. We also need to take into account Marcus' core ethical project, which provides the background against which he approaches these topics. When Marcus is (though only partly) non-standard within Stoicism, the explanation, lies, I think, in his intense and sustained concern to take forward this project of ethical self-improvement—at all costs, one might say, though the project itself is conceived in standard Stoic terms.

Why is the interface between ethics, logic, and physics an important one for Stoicism? A striking—though not wholly unique—feature of Stoicism is that, although the three main branches of philosophy were elaborated to a high degree, there was also a well-marked aspiration toward a unified understanding, combining, and in some sense synthesizing the findings of all three areas.[161] Although this general point is widely accepted, there has been much recent debate about how, exactly, the relationship between the branches of knowledge should be understood, especially regarding ethics and physics. A long established view, supported by some well-known pieces of evidence, is that the relationship between them is hierarchical, and that physics provides what are, in some sense, the foundations of

[159] See Introd., nn. 24–5.
[160] Compare Giavatto 2008, van Ackeren 2011, for this view.
[161] See, highlighting parallels with Epicureanism in this respect, Gill 2006: 160–2, 186, 193–4, 199–200.

ethics.[162] However, it has also been argued that the Stoic branches of knowledge, including ethics, were conceived as essentially independent and free-standing, even though at least some Stoics also aimed to provide a broader conceptual framework for ethics by adding the perspective of physics.[163] It has also been argued that the relationship between Stoic ethics and physics was mutually supporting, rather than that physics were foundational for ethics.[164]

My own view on this topic is that, while Stoicism aspired to combine all three branches of knowledge, this combination is typically conceived as reciprocal and non-hierarchical. The underlying thought is that the best available accounts of ethics and physics (and logic, as Stoics understand this branch of philosophy) are compatible and mutually supporting. Also, although some of our sources sometimes point to a fixed order for studying the three branches of knowledge,[165] the process of synthesizing them is best seen as circular, rather than linear; it involves moving repeatedly between branches and pulling together the insights from each branch. Certain topics, such as the theory of determinism, or certain sub-branches of knowledge, such as theology, have a special role as interface topics or areas. Theology is sometimes presented in our sources as the culminating topic within physics, and thus as providing a basis for ethics. But it is also clear from surviving discussions of Stoic theology that this topic is also strongly informed by the categories and standpoint of ethics.[166] Certainly, there is nothing to suggest that physics was conceived by Stoics as offering what is, in modern terms, an independent, 'value-free', and purely 'scientific' basis for ethics.[167] At any rate, this is the picture of the relationship between the branches of knowledge in Stoicism assumed here—though, as just

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[162] See e.g. Long 1996: ch. 6, Striker 1996: 225–31; also LS 63 A–B.

[163] See Annas 1993: 159–79, 1995; for critical responses to this view, see Cooper 1995, Betegh 2003, Boeri 2009. For reviews of the debate, see Gill 2004, 2006: 146–50. On the question how far this aspiration to a unified conceptual framework was actually realized in Stoic thought, see Inwood 2009.

[164] See Annas 2007.

[165] See LS 26 A–E. We find, in fact, different and competing orders for studying the branches of knowledge, which suggests there was no definitive order.

[166] For evidence, see LS 54. Questions about the goodness of god and about the goodness (order, structure, regularity) built into the universe play a prominent role in Stoic theology. See Frede 2002, Boeri 2009.

[167] See further Gill 2004, 2006: 145–66, 197–200. For the view that nature is not conceived in Stoicism or other Greek theories as 'foundational' in the modern sense (what Bernard Williams calls 'Archimedean', i.e. as an objective, but *external*, foundation), see also Gill 1990, 1996: 430–43.

explained, the relationship between them remains a matter of scholarly debate.

Where, in general terms, should we place the standpoint of the *Meditations* on this question? Ethics is, clearly, central to Marcus' concerns here. Indeed, although there have been some recent discussions of his thinking on logic and physics,[168] it is, in a way, misleading to suggest that the *Meditations* treat these areas in their own right. Marcus draws on the interface between the three areas, but always with a view to taking forward an essentially ethical (and practical) project, that of ongoing self-improvement. Mostly, it seems to me, Marcus' handling of these areas of interface is in line with that found in other Stoic sources, including those usually seen as reflecting mainstream Stoicism. In cases where we find what is—or seems to be—a more non-standard view, this derives from a rather over-zealous pursuit of his ethical objectives, leading him to re-describe or omit points that might be made in a more theoretical or didactic Stoic treatment. However, even in such cases, we do not, I think, find eclecticism in the sense of the deliberate combination of different theoretical standpoints. A related factor is that, as Marcus himself accentuates, his expertise in the areas of logic and physics was not advanced.[169] However, this does not mean that he had *no* expertise in these areas, or that he did not understand the typical Stoic view of how these branches of knowledge were interrelated.

I begin with the relatively straightforward topic of the interface between ethics and logic, before considering Marcus' treatment of psychology, which involves all three branches of knowledge. I then examine the linkage between ethics and physics, starting with cases where Marcus' ideas are fully in line with standard Stoicism before examining his sometimes puzzling treatment of the alternative 'providence or atoms'.

Did Marcus actually know enough about Stoic logic for the area of the interface between ethics and logic to be a significant one for him? Much depends on how, exactly, we interpret his disavowals of expertise in logic (and physics), just noted. These comments seem, in part at least, to reflect the conviction, found also in Seneca and Epictetus, that the overall aim of studying logic (and physics) is to enable real-life progress in ethical development. Hence, we find in the *Meditations* passages suggesting that

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[168] See Giavatto 2012a and Sedley 2012.
[169] See *Med*. 1.7.22, 7.67.3. On the question of eclecticism in *Med*., see Introd., text to nn. 24–30.

over-elaboration in *any* area of philosophy, including ethics, may be misguided unless this practical objective is held in view.[170] However, this does not mean that logic, or physics, cannot be used appropriately for this purpose.[171] In pursuing this point, we need to be aware that logic, or rather 'dialectic', the Stoic term for this branch of knowledge, is broadly conceived. It is not limited to formal logic, that is, modes of valid reasoning, though this was a highly developed area of Stoic theory. It also embraces study of language, including rhetoric, as well as what we would call theory of knowledge and of reality (epistemology and ontology).[172] Arguably, we can find in the *Meditations* passages that reflect all or most of these aspects, though subordinated to Marcus' fundamental project of ethical self-improvement.

Thus, we can find some, though limited, use of the techniques of formal reasoning that constituted an important and distinctive feature of Stoic philosophy and were still widely studied in the Imperial era.[173] On the whole, most examples of such formal reasoning we find in the *Meditations* seem to be validly argued, though some of Marcus' uses of disjunctive argument in connection with the 'providence or atoms' theme are more questionable.[174] Rhetoric also falls with the scope of Stoic logic or dialectic, although this topic is much less important for them than the study of formal logic.[175] In the *Meditations*, we find extensive use of rhetorical devices or figures of speech, such as similes or analogies. Though such devices partly reflect Marcus' extensive rhetorical training by Fronto and others, they also, more crucially, show his use of style for his own special objective of ethical self-encouragement. In this respect, his method is consistent with Stoic rhetorical principles, which subordinate use of style to philosophical content.[176]

Three other features of the *Meditations* fall into the interface between ethics and dialectic. A striking feature of Stoic theory is the idea that 'the

[170] See Giavatto 2012a: 409–11, referring to 1.7.2, 2.13.1–2.13.2, 2.48.1; also Introd., text to n. 17.
[171] This is suggested in 8.13 (see Giavatto 2012a: 411).
[172] See LS 27–42; also Long 1996: 86–104.
[173] See further LS 36–38; on Stoic logic in this period see Barnes 1997. Marcus' contemporary Galen drew extensively on Stoic logic (Gill 2010a: 53–4).
[174] See Giavatto 2012a: 415–18, referring to 4.4.1–4.4.2, 4.3.5, 5.16, 10.6.1. On 'providence or atoms', see Giavatto 2008: 213–28 and discussion later.
[175] See LS 31 A, H; also LS, vol. 1: 188–9.
[176] See Giavatto 2012b; also Giavatto 2008: ch. 5, esp. pp. 160–1, and van Ackeren 2011: 312–16. Kasulke 2005: 272–326 stresses the influence of Fronto on the style of the *Meditations*; but note the reservations about Kasulke's view in van Ackeren 2011: 314–15 fn. 1335.

wise person is always a dialectician', and that dialectic itself, if properly practised, is a kind of virtue. These ideas reflect the fact that the Stoic norm of 'wisdom' embraces virtually all practical and theoretical skills, as well as the ideal of a type of understanding that combines the three branches of philosophy. Marcus, in his characterization of the kind of ideal character-state towards which he works in the *Meditations*, includes terms which evoke Stoic accounts of dialectical virtue. These include 'non-precipitancy' (*aproptōsia*) and 'uncarelessness' (*aneikaiotēs*), unusual terms which carry special Stoic connotations.[177] Marcus's stress on truth and truthfulness may also be seen as part of his characterization of the ideal towards which he urges himself. This theme is repeatedly stressed in the *Meditations*, and is sometimes interpreted in purely biographical terms, as a personal quality or aspiration.[178] However, the conception of truth presupposed is broad, embracing truth of discourse, moral truth, and truth to reality; and this theme reflects the kind of knowledge of truth ascribed to the wise person, along with dialectical virtue.[179]

A related feature is the widespread use of terms which play an important role in Stoic epistemology and psychology, in spite of the generally non-technical character of the vocabulary in the *Meditations*. An especially common term is *phantasia* ('impression', 'appearance'), used in a wide range of ways; also quite common are *ennoia* ('concept', 'thought'), *hupolēpsis* ('supposition') and the adjective *katalēptikos* ('cognitive'). This suggests that Marcus is more steeped in the language and categories of Stoic dialectic than is evident at first.[180] However, as elsewhere, the focus tends to be on the ethical implications of the way we use our mental and cognitive capacities. For instance, one theme especially linked with this vocabulary is that we should 'dye' our minds by dwelling on the right kind of impressions; another is that we should not be not be too quick in attaching to our experiences the judgement that such and such an act is good or bad.[181] In this respect, Marcus' use of epistemological vocabulary can be

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[177] See D. L. 7.46–7.48, 7.83 (cited) (=LS 31 B–C), LS 41 D; also Long 1996: ch. 4; Gourinat 2000: 69–87. See *Med*. 2.5.2, 2.13.2, 3.9.2, 4.49.5; Giavatto 2008: 65–88, and 2012a: 413–14.

[178] Brunt 1974: 8–10.

[179] See Giavatto 2008: 89–109, esp. 106–9.

[180] See Giavatto 2008: 31–63, van Ackeren 2011: 557–68. See LS 39–41 for standard Stoic use of this kind of vocabulary.

[181] See e.g. 5.16, also 4.3.10, 5.9, 8.49; also Giavatto 2008: 47–51, 61–3, 2012a: 415–16. For the second theme (and the influence of Epictetus on this feature of *Med*.), see Introd., text to nn. 187–8.

linked with his use of the 'analytic' or 'stripping' method, illustrated earlier in connection with 3.11.[182]

This last feature leads naturally to the main topic in this section, Marcus' use of psychological vocabulary and its relationship to standard Stoic theory. 'Psychology', as a topic in Stoic theory, falls on the interface between physics, ethics, and, to some degree, logic or dialectic, depending on the aspect being considered.[183] A key claim of Stoic ethical theory is that human beings are constitutively capable of developing to become rational and sociable, and that these two characteristics are integrally linked, for instance, by the use of language. Also, Stoics claim that human beings are naturally equipped to carry out a two-fold process of ethical development, conceived as 'appropriation' (*oikeiōsis*). The later stages of this developmental process are taken to lead, on the one hand, to the recognition of the absolute value of virtue, and, on the other, to ethically shaped engagement with other human beings both in localized relationships and in a more universal sense of human community.[184] Stoics presuppose that human psychological capacities are fundamentally suited to enable this kind of development. They posit a unitary psychophysical organ, the 'leading part' or 'ruling centre' (*hēgemonikon*), which is the seat of all psychological functions, including sensation, motivation, and reasoning, which they place in the heart. By contrast with Plato and Aristotle, who allocate reasoning and emotion or desire to distinct psychological functions, sometimes conceived, by Plato at least, as based in different parts of the body, Stoicism locates all these functions in the unitary leading organ.[185] In the Stoic view, a complete course of development is seen as involving correlated changes in emotions and desires, with no need for a separate programme of training of non-rational functions.[186]

Stoic teachers and writers of practical ethics offer various ways of formulating these key distinctive themes. Epictetus does so by stressing that human beings, as rational animals, are uniquely capable of exercising the

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[182] See Introd., text to nn. 99–103; also, stressing the link between this method and Marcus' use of Stoic dialectic, see van Ackeren 2011: 580–97.

[183] See further LS 39 (on impression, as part of epistemology), 53 (psychophysical functions, as part of physics), and 65 (passions, as part of ethics); also Gill 2010a: 35–9.

[184] See Gill 2006: 132–3, 137–45; also Brennan 2003: 260–9, Graver 2008: 15–34. See LS 60 B–F, and Cic. *Off.* 1.11–1.14. On the two aspects of Stoic ethical development, see Introd., text to n. 82.

[185] See LS 53 G–H; contrast Pl. *Ti.* 66–72 (three parts of the psyche allocated to three different bodily locations). On bodily location of psychological functions, see Gill 2010a: 95–103, 118–23; on Platonic-Aristotelian part-based psychology, see Gill 1996: 245–60; and on Stoic psychological and psychophysical holism, Gill 2006: 29–46, 75–100, 129–45.

[186] See Gill 2006: 133–8, 141–5; also Graver 2008: chs. 2, 7.

capacity for rational agency or decision (*prohairesis*). This enables us to distinguish what is and is not 'up to us' (*eph' hēmin*), and to 'examine' our impressions (*phantasiai*) before giving 'assent' in ways that shape our motives and emotions as well as our beliefs and actions.[187] In the *Meditations*, we find a similar set of themes, though presented as forming part of a self-directed programme of development, rather than, as in Epictetus, part of other-directed ethical encouragement and advice. Marcus too stresses the importance of examining impressions before giving assent; this is often coupled with urging himself not to add to impressions the judgement that a given action or object is good or bad.[188] Marcus also assumes that the addition of this judgement by the ruling centre activates motivation or impulse (*hormē*), including emotions, and actions.[189] Marcus formulates these features, typically, in terms of the capacities of the ruling centre (*hēgemonikon*), or sometimes the inner *daimōn*, treated as equivalent to the ruling centre, rather than by referring to *prohairesis*, as Epictetus does, but in other respects his thinking is very close to Epictetus on this topic.[190]

This aspect of the *Meditations* is fully in line with standard Stoic thinking. However, some related aspects are more unexpected. Sometimes we find the terms body and psyche[191] used in ways that imply that these entities are different in kind.[192] We also find recurrent use of an unfamiliar, three-fold division, typically, between ruling centre or 'mind' (*nous*), psyche or *pneuma*, and flesh or body, or at least two of these categories.[193] This three-fold division is unexpected in various ways. The normal Stoic standpoint is what we might call psychophysical monism or holism: the psyche is conceived as physical and identified with one of the natural elements, *pneuma*, a mixture of fire and air. The ruling centre (*hēgemonikon*) is conceived as having a bodily location, in the heart, and as operating in and through the body.[194] On the face of it, Marcus' language implies a

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[187] See e.g. Epict. *Diss.* 1.17, 3.21–3.23, *Ench.* 1. See Inwood 1985: 115–26, 224–42, Long 2002: 129–36, 207–20.

[188] See e.g. 3.6.2, 5.26, 8.49, 11.37.

[189] See van Ackeren 2011: 568–80; also Hadot 1998: 101–27.

[190] See e.g. 3.6.2, 6.8, 7.16, 8.48; also Long 2012, and van Ackeren 2011: 574 fn. 857 (on uses of *daimōn*).

[191] The Greek term 'psyche' (*psuchē*) has no single English equivalent, and none of the possible translations (e.g. 'soul', 'personality', 'life', 'character') matches all its uses, so I normally simply use 'psyche'.

[192] See e.g. 6.32, also 3.7.3, 10.1.1, 10.38.

[193] See 2.2, 3.16, 5.26, 5.33, 7.16, 8.56.1, 12.3, 12.14.4–12.14.5; see the useful table in van Ackeren 2011: 491.

[194] See LS 45, 53; also Long 1996: ch. 10, Gill 2006: 29–46, 2010a: 82–4, 95–103, 153–4.

different or innovative picture of psychology or human nature. Accordingly, some scholars have ascribed to Marcus the adoption of an eclectic position, combining his normal Stoic approach with a Platonic-style contrast between psyche, or mind, and body. Alternatively, he has been seen as pioneering a new psychological model, though one strongly shaped by Platonic ideas.[195]

However, there are several problems with this line of explanation. As noted earlier, eclecticism in the sense of a deliberate combination of aspects of different philosophical positions is highly exceptional in ancient thought, including this period.[196] One thinker who is (explicitly) eclectic or independent is Galen, who was one of Marcus' medical advisers. In 162–6, during the same period as Marcus was, probably, writing his *Meditations*, Galen wrote the first six books of a work that was designed to combine the Platonic tripartite account of the psyche with the brain-centred anatomy that he had adopted and developed from earlier medical research. In the course of the work, Galen strongly criticizes the Stoic unitary (heart-centred) psychophysiology and theory of emotions.[197] We have no evidence suggesting that Marcus was aware of Galen's philosophical views, on this or any other topic.[198] But Galen's discussion, in its style and objectives, offers an instructive contrast to the *Meditations*. In Marcus' work, there is a striking absence of the explicit combination of theoretical positions and rejection of intellectual alternatives that constitute the dominant subject matter of Galen's writing on this subject.[199]

A further problem for this interpretation is that Marcus indicates that he still presupposes the standard Stoic psychophysical position, and does so sometimes when he is using what seem to be dualistic or three-fold typologies. Some passages refer explicitly to psychophysical links between the ruling centre and the (rest of) the body (5.26, 7.55, 10.24). Other passages presuppose that we are composed of physical elements, unified by a scale of different kinds of cohesion (11.20 and 6.14). A further passage acknowledges that 'What makes up this being of mine is flesh, and a bit of breath

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[195] See e.g. Erbse 1954; Asmis 1989: 2238–44; Reale 1990: 94–5; Alesse 2001 (see further on this view of Marcus' psychology as eclectic, van Ackeren 2011: 489–90). His usage is seen as strongly influenced by Posidonius by Neuenschwander 1951: 52.

[196] See Introd., text to n. 28.

[197] See *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 1–6, esp. 2–5, attacking Stoicism on these points.

[198] See Tieleman 2009: 294–6.

[199] On Galen's mode of argument, see further Tieleman 1996, 2003: ch. 1, Gill 2010a: chs. 3–4.

and the ruling centre' (2.2.1). Thus, while presented as distinct, all three elements make up my 'being'.[200] If some aspects of Marcus' terminology seem to point to a psychological theory that he does not actually hold, how should we explain it? The same question arises in connection with Epictetus (and Seneca, to some extent), where we also find a kind of quasi-dualistic language which seems not to reflect the psychological theory being assumed. Discussing this usage in Epictetus, A. A. Long suggests that the 'sharp contrast between body and the mind' should be taken 'in an ethical rather than a metaphysical sense' (2002: 158). The contrast is used, along with Epictetus' standard distinction between what is and is not 'up to us', to demarcate two kinds of focus or way of life open to us as agents. Either we aim at what is not 'up to us', 'externals' (or 'indifferents', in more technical terms), such as health and wealth, or we aim at using our rational agency (*prohairesis*) to try to develop and exercise virtue, the only real good; Epictetus, of course, advocates adopting the second objective in our lives. His contrast between *prohairesis* and the body thus has a practical ethical point, rather than being designed to advance a Platonic-style psychology.[201]

Marcus' terminology, which may have been influenced in this respect by Epictetus, seems best explained in the same way.[202] Epictetus' message about how we should shape our lives is central to the *Meditations*, and it is often formulated by advocating proper use of the ruling centre (*hēgemonikon*).[203] Sometimes, Marcus reinforces this message by contrasting the mind, or ruling centre, with the body. In such cases, 'the body' stands for a motivational focus on external advantages, such as health or property, rather than on directing one's way of life towards virtue. In some passages (e.g. 3.16, 12.2), the connection with contrasting types of value is made explicitly.[204] Marcus often uses belittling diminutives for body and also psyche or *pneuma* (the latter terms seems to be used in these cases to mean—mere—'animation' and 'breath' respectively), and this underlines the intended effect of the contrast.[205] This account of Marcus'

[200] See Gill 2007b: 198–206.

[201] See Long 2002: 158, where Long also notes that Epictetus elsewhere refers to *pneuma* as the substance of the psyche (2.23.3, 3.3.22). For examples of this quasi-dualism, see Epict. *Diss.* 1.1.23, 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 1.20.17–1.20.18, 2.22.19. See also Sen. *Ep.* 65.18, Preface to *Natural Questions*, 13.

[202] For this view, see Gill 2006: 96–100, 2007a: 176–9, 2007b: 193–7, van Ackeren 2011: 479–502, Long 2012: 467–73.

[203] See Introd., text to n. 190.

[204] See e.g. 3.16, 12.2.

[205] See e.g. 2.2.1, 5.33.4, 6, 12.3.1, 12.14.5; also Introd., text to n. 193. See van Ackeren 2011: 491, 495–6.

usage explains why he shows no awareness of a tension between his quasi-dualistic vocabulary and the standard Stoic psychophysical theory he also presupposes. The quasi-dualism in this vocabulary represents an alternative way of expressing the ideas that, I suggested earlier, make up the first two strands in Marcus' ethical outlook. His life-long commitment to a core ethical project of deliberate, ongoing, self-improvement corresponds to 'mind' or 'ruling centre', while the transitory, physical elements which represent an unavoidable dimension of our life as embodied animals correspond to 'psyche' or 'flesh'.[206]

Marcus' quasi-dualistic vocabulary may strike us as especially surprising, or misleading, if we approach it against the background of the contrast between Stoic (unified) and Platonic (tripartite) psychology of which Galen makes so much.[207] Also, Marcus sometimes uses phraseology which seems to imply what I have described as the 'essentialist move'. This is the tendency, which we find in Plato and Aristotle, to present one aspect of our nature as the core or essential aspect of our nature, a tendency which can be opposed to the more holistic conception of human personality in Stoicism (and Epicureanism).[208] But we have no reason to think that Marcus has a contrast of this kind in view. In 3.6, for instance, Marcus alludes to Socrates and to what we would see as Platonic mind-body dualism to underline a thoroughly Stoic contrast between a focus on gaining preferable indifferents and seeking to express virtue.[209] But there is no ground for thinking that the allusion carries with it a commitment to Platonic dualistic psychology. Also, the essentialist move is made in Plato and Aristotle to provide an ontological basis for determinate, and often controversial, theoretical positions, though ones with substantive practical ethical implications.[210] There is no basis for attributing objectives of this kind to Marcus. In fact, as indicated earlier, the 'essentialist move' is at odds with the psychological (or ontological) position he assumes.[211]

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[206] See Introd., text to nn. 153–7.
[207] See Introd., text to n. 197; the contrast is also central to Plutarch's *On Ethical Virtue* (*Mor.* 440 D–452 D, see further Gill 2006: 219–38).
[208] See Gill 2006: 5–10.
[209] See Gill 2007b: 197–8.
[210] See e.g. Pl. *Alc.* 1, 128e–130c, 132c–133c, *Phd.* 68a–69d, 78d–84b, *R.* 611d–612a; Arist. *EN* 9.4, 1166a16–1166a17, 1166a22–1166a23, 9.8, 1168b34–1169a2, 10.8, 1178a2–1178a3. In Aristotle, relevant debates are about the proper basis for friendship and the rival merits of theoretical and practical virtue as constitutive of happiness. See further Gill 1996: 356–83.
[211] See e.g. 2.2.1, cited above and 12.3.1–12.3.2; both passages allow that all three aspects (mind, psyche, and body) make up one's nature, even if, in 12.3, mind is presented as 'yours in a full sense' (*kuriōs son*)'. See also Gill 2007b: 204, van Ackeren 2011: 500–2.

Essentialist phraseology is simply one way among others of formulating his standard self-directed ethical message, which is based on a Stoic ethical framework whose validity he does not question.

Ethics and Other Branches of Philosophy: the Universe

The other aspect of the interface between ethics and physics that figures prominently in the *Meditations* is Marcus' thinking about the moral significance of the natural universe. Here too, many of his reflections fall squarely within standard patterns of Stoic theory; but some features of his thinking are exceptional. The most obvious, and much debated, is his repeated posing of the alternatives, 'providence or atoms', together with the fact that he does not always endorse the Stoic side of the opposition. But this feature can be linked with certain other, less obviously non-standard, features. One is a tendency to moralize on the basis of natural facts in a way that does not quite match normal Stoic modes of linking ethics and physics. Another is a tendency to raise questions about the nature of the universe—in its most general or remote aspects—and, in some cases, at least, to leave the answer rather open. There is a marked contrast with Marcus' presentation of Stoic ethics, which are never questioned or probed in quite this way. It is tempting to explain this difference, in part at least, by reference to Marcus' explicit acknowledgement that his study of physics (and logic) was significantly less advanced than that of ethics.[212]

As explained earlier, there is continuing scholarly debate about how to understand the relationship between Stoic ethics and physics. Physics, at least in broad terms (what Inwood calls 'big-picture physics')[213] is sometimes seen by scholars as providing a foundation for ethics. Alternatively, the relationship between the two branches (and also logic) can be seen as reciprocal and mutually informing, with certain key areas—notably theology and determinism—serving as interface zones, drawing on the insights of all three branches.[214] The *Meditations*, like Epictetus' *Discourses*, give a significant role to this interface; in this respect both works present Stoic philosophy in what one source describes as a 'mixed' form.[215] Although Marcus draws on a number of topics in this interface, three are of special importance. These are the presentation of the goal of human life

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[212] See 1.17.22, 7.67.
[213] Inwood 2009: 208–9, 221–2.
[214] See Introd., text to nn. 161–7.
[215] See D. L. 7.40 (= LS 26 B(4)). On the ethics–physics interface in Epictetus, see Long 2002: chs. 6–7.

(the *telos*) in cosmic terms, the idea of natural or divine providence, and determinism.[216] These themes are, of course, not treated in a systematic style; they are incorporated in various ways into reflections which form part of Marcus' main project of ethical self-improvement.

The goal of human life is characterized in Stoicism in a number of different forms, which seem intended to be mutually informing, rather than exclusive alternatives. One is that of 'agreement' or 'consistency' (*homologia*); another is the recognition of virtue as constitutive of happiness or the good and the expression of virtue (and happiness) in one's character and life (LS 59 D(4–6), 60, 63). We are also told that Chrysippus, the main Stoic theorists, described it in more cosmic terms in *On Ends* Book 1. The report we have is worth citing, since this passage (or the source on which it is based) seems to be one that Marcus knew well and which he refers to repeatedly in the *Meditations*.

Therefore, living in agreement with nature comes to be the end (*telos*), which is in accordance with one's own nature and that of the universe, engaging in no activity which is normally forbidden by the common law, which is right reason pervading everything and identical with Zeus, who is this director of the administration of existing things. The virtue of the happy person and his good flow of life are just this: always doing everything on the basis of the harmony (*sumphōnia*) of each person's guardian spirit (*daimōn*) with the will of the administrator of the whole.[217]

The characterization of the nature of happiness or the goal of human life is a central theme in the *Meditations* and forms a key theme in Marcus' core project of ethical self-improvement; several features of this passage just cited evoke Marcus' most common themes. One is the importance of thinking of himself as part of a larger, universal or cosmic, whole. This is closely linked with conceiving himself as a part of an organic social whole (whether local or more broadly human); this social whole is also characterized by reference to the cosmic whole of which it forms a part.[218] A distinct, but related, move, often noted as typical of the *Meditations*, is an attempt by

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[216] For a full treatment, see van Ackeren 2011: 361–474, which also discusses religious ideas in *Med.* (444–74); for an outline of Marcus' world-view, see Sedley 2012.

[217] D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3–4)), trans. modified; see other formulations of the goal of life in LS 63 A–B, C(1–2).

[218] See e.g. 2.16, 3.4, 7.13; on this linkage, see Gourinat 2012a: 421–3. This is one aspect of the 'holism', by contrast with 'core-centred' or 'essentialist' thinking, that is characteristic of Stoicism; see Gill 2006: 2–4, 15–16. This holism is analysed as a conceptual framework based on the idea of 'structure', rather than 'composition', in Gill 2010a: 14–17, 182–7. For a (highly critical) philosophical analysis of the idea of 'the whole' (the universe) as a source of moral normativity, see Barnes 1990.

Marcus to see himself and others 'from above', that is, from a quasi-cosmic perspective.[219] A second recurrent motif is that the realization of Marcus' potential as a rational and ethical agent would constitute the full expression of his 'guardian spirit', a term used as a synonym for his mind or 'ruling centre'. This is also described as harmonizing his guardian spirit with the will, direction, or rationality in the universe as a whole.[220]

The *Meditations*, as well as evoking this kind of description of the goal of life, can also help to clarify the line of thought underlying passages such as that just cited (D. L. 7.88). The key thought seems to be that for human beings to develop towards virtue (and thus happiness, the ultimate goal of human life) is to realize their distinctive nature or constitution, as rational animals, within the framework of the universe as a whole. Also, ethical development involves the production in oneself of qualities, including rationality, cohesion, order, sense of community and of providential care for others, that are seen as in-built in the universe or cosmos.[221] Of course, an underlying premise of this line of thought is that the natural universe does indeed express these qualities, a claim strongly maintained by Stoics, but vigorously disputed by their critics.[222] This is a second prominent theme of the *Meditations*. Marcus repeatedly underlines the idea that the natural universe is unified, rational, and cohesive, and that it provides a harmonious, supportive, and providential context for its inhabitants.[223] A related theme is that a natural sympathy does—or should— exist between ourselves and the universe in these respects.[224] This idea can be linked, in turn, with Marcus' recurrent contrast between the 'causal' and 'material' principles. This is Marcus' version of a distinction fundamental to Stoic physics, between 'active' and 'passive' (or 'material') principles; but it is also linked by Marcus with his recurrent contrast between human ethical agency and our nature as transient, material objects.[225]

[219] See e.g. 7.48, 9.30, 11.1, 12.24. See Rutherford 1989: 155–61, Engberg-Pedersen 1998: 311–16, who both stress that this theme, while Platonic in inspiration, is handled in an un-Platonic way.

[220] See e.g. 2.13, 2.17.4, 3.6.2, 3.7.2. See also van Ackeren 2011: 451.

[221] See, on this line of thought in *Med.*, van Ackeren 2011: 613–26; also, in Stoicism in general, Striker 1996: 225–31, Frede 1999.

[222] See LS 54; Cic. *ND* Book 2 is a prime source; see further Frede 2002, Boeri 2009. Nature's providentiality is also a thesis maintained in a strong form by Marcus' contemporary, Galen; see Hankinson 1989, Gill 2010: 66–75.

[223] See e.g. 2.3, 3.2, 6.1, 8.50.

[224] See 4.40, 4.45, 7.9. Neuenschwander 1951: 14–21, sees these themes as reflecting the influence of Posidonius; but they are in line with Stoic thought in general.

[225] See e.g. 4.21.5 (with note), 5.13.1, 7.29. See Sedley 2012: 398–9, and LS 44; also Introd., text to nn. 153–7.

A third recurrent theme, intertwined with the first two, is reference to the Stoic idea of determinism or Fate. This aspect of Stoic theory, like the theme of providence (a key topic of Stoic theology), functions, I think, as an interface zone, bringing together the insights of logic, ethics, and physics and drawing out their mutual implications.[226] There are two main ethical consequences. One, associated especially with Chrysippus, is that determinism (understood as constituting a seamless web of universal causation) is compatible with the distinctively human capacity, as rational animals, for ethical agency and responsibility.[227] This theme is also underlined by Epictetus (*Diss.* 1.17.15–1.17.27), and figures in the *Meditations*. One of the chapters of the *Meditations* (10.33) seems to evoke one of Chrysippus' key images (the cylinder and cone) to convey this idea.[228] The compatibilism implied in the Chrysippean theory is also evoked in Marcus' repeated stress on exercising our capacity for rational agency in a way that is in line with the providential rationality in the universe.[229] The second theme is less prominent in Stoic theoretical discussions, though it also forms part of standard Stoic thought.[230] It also plays a significant role in the *Meditations*. This is the idea that recognizing an event as part of a determined sequence, and thus as part of the providentially shaped, cosmic order, should make us ready to accept even apparently painful or disastrous events.[231] This theme can be linked with Marcus' attitude to death and human, or cosmic, transience, discussed earlier. Accepting events conventionally seen as bad, treated as 'indifferents' in Stoic ethics, and regarding them as part of the natural order forms a key part of the programme of ongoing ethical development towards which Marcus urges himself through the *Meditations*.[232] To this extent, the theme of accepting fate also has a positive, agent-centred, dimension which brings it into line with the other main ethical implication

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[226] See Gill 2006: 197–200.

[227] See LS 62 C–D (referring to Chrysippus).

[228] Bobzien (1998: 394–6) sees here evidence for a later (post-Chrysippean) version of the Stoic theory, though one which also stresses the scope for human agency. See also 4.6, 5.17, 5.28, 12.16, which stress the integral link between human character and action (compare LS 62 C(5–9), D).

[229] See Introd., text to nn. 217–20, esp. refs. in n. 220; also 3.11.4.

[230] For this strand, see Epict. 2.6.9 (=LS 58 J), ascribed to Chrysippus. For the view that the first theme (agency) rather than the second (acceptance of events as fated) represents the main focus of Stoic thought on the ethical implications of determinism, see Frede 2003: 203–5, Bobzien 1998: 234–337; but see also Bobzien 1998: 345–57 on the more fatalistic strand in Stoicism.

[231] See *Med.* 4.34, 5.8, 12.32; also Hadot 1998: 137–43.

[232] See Introd., text to nn. 150–7.

of determinism in Stoicism and with the type of compatibilism that is characteristic of the theory.

Most of the passages in the *Meditations* which deal with the interface of ethics and the natural universe reflect rather standard moves in Stoic theory. But there are two features (apart from the 'providence or atoms' motif) which are more unexpected. The first is that, in a small number of passages, Marcus bases moral advice or conclusions on natural facts in an unusual way. A standard claim in Stoic theory is that distinctive features of human beings, by contrast with other natural kinds—above all, rationality (shared with gods)—underlie our capacity for ethical agency and the ethical expectations we have of each other and ourselves. This claim is sometimes coupled with brief uses of the *scala naturae* (spectrum of natural kinds) assumed in Stoicism.[233] In a few passages, Marcus seems to be making the same kind of move; but, on closer inspection, his line of thought is exceptional.

For instance, in 6.14, he refers to the Stoic idea that all entities can be placed on a spectrum of cohesion or 'tension' (*tonos*), a spectrum which can be used to demarcate advanced human characteristics, notably the character (*diathesis*) of the wise person.[234] But Marcus uses the spectrum to identify categories of value, in particular, the absolute value of virtue, by contrast with indifferents, in a way not paralleled elsewhere. In 11.20, Marcus refers to the Stoic idea that human beings, like all entities, constitute a 'total blend' of the four elements. This theory was also developed in Stoic theory, in ways not explored by Marcus, to show how the divine or active elements (air and fire) operated on the other two elements, in conjunction with the operation of 'tension', in a way that produced different levels or types of life-form, including human, and divine, rationality.[235] However, Marcus explores the quite different idea that the elements of our make-up maintain their proper function within the natural order whereas the intelligent part (the ruling centre) fails to exercise its natural function by acting badly.

In 3.16, Marcus correlates three aspects of our nature (body, psyche, and mind) with three psychological functions, sense-impressions, impulses or motives, and judgements. These are linked, firstly, with different kinds of non-human animals, and secondly, in the case of impressions and motives,

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[233] See e.g. D. L. 7.86–7.88 (= LS 57 A(4–5)) and 63 C, also 63 D–E; see further Inwood 1985: ch. 2.

[234] See LS 47 O–S; also Long 1996: 227–34, Gill 2010: 78–80.

[235] LS 47, also 44 B, 46 A–B; see also Long 1996: 227–44, von Staden 2000: 96–105.

with conspicuous examples of ethically bad character. Marcus concludes by urging himself, whatever capacities he shares with these other types, to exercise the special characteristics of a good person in trying to live a virtuous life. Although we appear to have here the standard Stoic use of the *scala naturae* to support ethical expectations of human beings as rational animals, the passage actually moves in a quite different direction, towards purely moral exhortation, with little use made of the references to natural kinds and capacities. In all three cases, what we find is a tendency to shift rather rapidly from reference to natural facts to ethical conclusions and advice, without examining the natural facts closely enough (or in an appropriate way) to support the ethical conclusions reached.[236] This tendency also manifests itself in some of the ways in which Marcus uses the 'providence or atoms' alternative, considered shortly.

A further feature of the *Meditations* is worth noting here. In a number of passages, Marcus raises a question about the natural universe, but leaves it unresolved. In some cases, the dilemma is on a topic on which Stoic theorists took different views, namely whether or not there were periodic cosmic cycles, punctuated by a universal conflagration,[237]and whether or not souls (or some souls) survive after death.[238] Elsewhere, Marcus alludes to a question left rather open in Stoic theory, whether or not divine providence involves care for individual human beings or only for the overall shaping of events.[239] In some cases too, he considers at least the Epicurean view that after death our bodies, as atoms, are dispersed into the universe.[240] Clearly, the passages where Marcus entertains non-Stoic theories as options are more problematic than those in which he alludes to topics debated within Stoic thought. But also rather striking is Marcus' readiness to raise questions about the natural universe but not to resolve them by argument or by reference to a firm doctrinal view. In some cases at least, the only resolution is adopting a specific kind of ethical response, such as inner confidence or firmness in the face of human transience.[241] This feature, along with the one just considered, indicates a degree of uncertainty in dealing with questions relating to the natural universe which is in

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[236] See also Gill 2007b: 200–6, Sedley 2012: 404.

[237] 10.7.2, 10.7.5–10.7.6, 5.13.4; see also LS 46, esp. I–P.

[238] 4.21: LS 53 W; also *SVF* 2.810–2.811, 2.815.

[239] 9.28.2; on the question within Stoic theory, see Frede 2002: 109–15, Bénatouïl 2009: 36–9. See also 6.44 (discussed later) and Comm. on 1.17, main note, and on 6.44.

[240] See e.g. 6.10, discussed below.

[241] See e.g. 9.28.4–9.28.5. Elsewhere, the resolution, if any, is rather enigmatic (e.g. 4.21.5).

sharp contrast to Marcus' consistency and confidence in presenting the principles of Stoic ethics.

A more striking feature of the work which points in the same direction is the repeated posing of the alternative, 'providence or atoms' (or some variant phrasing), asking whether the Stoic providential world-view or the Epicurean atomic one, which denies natural purpose, is true.[242] This feature is, indeed, rather puzzling; but the scale and nature of the puzzle should not be exaggerated. We need to take into account three preliminary points bearing on the topic. First, Marcus is not the first Stoic philosopher to raise this question; both Seneca and Epictetus do so, though their treatment of it is rather different and the theme is much less frequent in their writings.[243] Second, Marcus indicates, in a passage cited later (4.3.5), that his main reason for posing the question is to reaffirm his conviction in the Stoic world-view and thus provide himself with ethical and emotional support. Third, most of the passages in which the question is posed are explicable either on the lines suggested by 4.3.5 or on some other (relatively unproblematic) basis.[244] However, there are a few (three or perhaps five) passages, whose rationale is very difficult to explain. Some scholars have tended to focus on these passages, and treated them as constituting crucial evidence for Marcus' approach to this topic or, indeed, his general philosophical approach.[245] This way of reading seems to me methodologically questionable. I think one should focus on the predominant line of approach or thought in the *Meditations* (or any text), and centre one's reading on that, though without ignoring puzzling or discrepant features.

The passages on this theme can be subdivided into different groups, which vary in the degree to which they are problematic.[246] One, relatively unproblematic, group is that of passages which suggest that death should

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[242] For the relevant passages, see later, also van Ackeren 2011: 429 fn. 315. For primary evidence on Epicurean and Stoic views, see LS 13 and 54. On the ancient debate between exponents and critics of natural teleology, see Sedley 2007.

[243] See Epict., fr. 1, which dismisses questions of natural philosophy as irrelevant to ethics (on variant ways of reading this passage, see Barnes 1997: 25–7 and Long 2002: 149–50), and Sen. *Ep.* 16.4–16.5, which asserts that, on either world-view, philosophy is needed as a guide to life.

[244] Relevant too is the fact that Marcus expresses this theme in a disjunctive formula (whether *a* or *b* is the case, *x* follows), which tends to be used to confirm, rather than challenge, a given claim (*x*) and is employed by Marcus to support the principles of Stoic ethics. See Giavatto 2008: 213–28, 2012a: 417.

[245] See Introd., text to nn. 258–62.

[246] See Annas 2004: 108; also van Ackeren 2011: 429–30. As becomes clear in the following discussion, these groups are not water-tight; but they provide a starting-point for analysing Marcus' presentation of this theme.

not be feared either on a Stoic or Epicurean world-view. Here, the focus is not so much on the contrasting world-views as on the fact that both theories converge in regarding death as (relatively) non-significant.[247] Similarly, in other passages, Marcus commends the Epicureans for their attitude to physical pain.[248] Adopting this kind of view, as both Marcus and Seneca do, does not amount to eclecticism; it is a matter of acknowledging that different theories can reach points of localized agreement.[249]

In a second set of passages, where the 'providence or atoms' alternative is given more emphasis than in the first, Marcus adopts a more specifically Stoic position, though on various grounds.[250] It is worth noting that Marcus includes this theme in the list of topics cited in 4.3, a chapter in which Marcus seems to be reflecting on his own procedure in the *Meditations*. In 4.3.3, he refers to 'concise and fundamental principles, which will be enough, as soon as you encounter them, to cleanse you from all distress and send you back without resentment at the activities to which you return.'[251] Shortly afterwards (4.3.5), he says: 'Or will you resent what is allocated to you from the whole? Then, call to mind the alternative, "providence or atoms", and the arguments proving that the universe is a kind of city'. This comment, taken on its own, suggests that Marcus does not see the question as an open one but one that has already been settled by arguments or proofs (*apedeichthē*), of which he only has to remind himself to gain the required ethical or emotional effect.[252] Although this view does not match all the passages in which the theme occurs, it does correspond to some of the moves made within the second group and a third one considered shortly. For instance, in 11.18.2, Marcus appeals to 'first principles, supporting the idea that 'if there are not atoms, nature governs the whole; and if this is so, lower things exist for the sake of the higher, and the higher for one another'. Here, the ethical stance towards which Marcus urges himself at the start of the chapter (11.18.1) is supported by a (Stoic-style) appeal to nature, and to ethical principles built into the nature of things.[253] However, not all the

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[247] See 2.11, 6.24, 7.32, 8.25.

[248] See 7.33, 7.64, 9.41, 12.34.

[249] Compare Annas 2004: 109–10, Cooper 2004: 337–46, on this point.

[250] See 4.27, 6.10, 11.18, and perhaps 9.39.

[251] See Introd., text to nn. 19–22.

[252] Hadot (1998: 147–53) seems to infer from this passage that the whole 'providence or atoms' question is seen by Marcus as definitively settled. But this is not really reflected in the variety of treatments of the theme we find in the *Meditations*, as illustrated shortly; compare van Ackeren 2011: 433–5, on Hadot's treatment.

[253] For the ethical principles, see Cic. *Fin.* 3.62–3.68, esp. 3.66–3.67; also 3.64, presenting the universe as a kind of city.

passages in this group follow quite this pattern. In 4.27, Marcus appeals to an ethical principle, order within oneself, in support of the idea of order at the cosmic level, reinforced by the consideration that all things (presumably, human and cosmic affairs) 'are bound together by a common sympathy'. Two other passages (6.10 and 9.39) are more ambiguous in their effect, and have sometimes been taken, like the first set of passages, as recognizing that Stoic and Epicurean world-views allow for the same ethical outcome, on certain points.[254] However, I think it is more likely that in 6.10 (explicitly) and 9.39 (implicitly), Marcus presupposes the validity of the Stoic ethical standpoint, even if he leaves the alternative, 'providence or atoms', unresolved as a question about the natural universe.

The stance taken in the last two passages is more fully worked out in the final, and most problematic, group.[255] The common element here is that, in spite of leaving the question open, Marcus assures himself that the Stoic ethical position remains secure. In 10.6, as in 11.18 and 4.27, discussed earlier, he assumes the validity of the Stoic view of providential nature and its ethical implications, though in this case without spelling out exactly how this is related to the 'providence or atoms' alternative he has posed.[256] In 6.44, he reviews Stoic and Epicurean views about the validity or invalidity of the idea of divine providence. Even on the third view, Marcus suggests, he is entitled to reassure himself of the force of Stoic ethical principles (6.44.4–6.44.6). Similarly, in 12.14, after outlining Stoic and Epicurean positions, he concludes that he can confirm his ethical self-confidence on the basis of either Stoic or Epicurean world-views. The chapter concludes with these words (12.14.4–12.44.5):

And, if a leaderless confusion [the Epicurean option], be glad that in such a storm you yourself have in yourself a mind that gives leadership (*nous hēgemōn*). And if the storm carries you away, it may carry off the poor flesh (*sarkidion*), the breath (*pneuma*), and the rest, but the mind it will not carry off.

Marcus does not spell out exactly what his conclusion implies. But, as in 6.44 and 10.6, he assures himself that he can retain confidence in the Stoic

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[254] Annas (2004: 108 fn. 21) includes 6.10 in the first group. Cooper (2004: 347–9) sees 6.10 and 9.39 as considering the Epicurean world-view as a viable option. Thus he regards these two passages as falling into what I am presenting as the third group, discussed shortly.

[255] See 6.44, 12.14, also 10.6. As indicated in the preceding note, 6.10 and 9.39 could also be placed in this group since the Epicurean world-view is not explicitly ruled out in them.

[256] Farquharson (1944: 823) suggests that a phrase may have dropped out (such as 'if there is [providential] nature'), so that Marcus is at this point only considering the implications of the Stoic world-view.

ethical principles he normally assumes (expressed here in the idea of 'mind', as opposed to other aspects of the self),[257] even if the Epicurean world-view is not ruled out.

The last group of passages[258] are especially hard to make sense of, and have been the focus of much recent discussion, attempting to define Marcus' handling of this question, which is seen also as illuminating his overall intellectual outlook. The main problem is that Marcus reaffirms Stoic ethical principles, *regardless*—as it seems—whether the Stoic or Epicurean world-view is correct.[259] He does so, in spite of the fact that, as he himself recognizes, Stoic and Epicurean world-views are closely bound up with their respective ethical principles, and without explaining why Stoic principles are, none the less, confirmed. Scholars have offered various responses to this problem. It has been suggested that, for Marcus, Stoicism has become more like a religion or informal 'philosophy of life' than a philosophical system in the full sense.[260] An alternative view is that passages such as 6.44 and 12.14 express a conviction in an 'inner self' or 'intellectual self' which is independent of Marcus' beliefs (or his scepticism) about the world in which this self is located.[261] A third line of explanation is that Marcus' stance here reflects a willingness to reach conclusions on ethics which are not dependent on, or explicitly linked with, claims about physics. Although Stoic philosophy is sometimes formulated in a 'mixed' form, combining the findings of ethics and physics, Stoic ethics is sometimes presented on its own, without explicit reference to physics. This might explain Marcus' readiness, in this last group of passages, to reaffirm his confidence in Stoic ethical principles, although the question which world-view is correct is left open.[262]

The third line of explanation, that of Annas, seems to me much more promising than the other two. This view matches Marcus' general

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[257] The psychological vocabulary evokes passages assuming the validity of the Stoic psychological picture and its ethical implications (see Introd., text to n. 185).

[258] That is, 6.44, 10.6, and 12.14 (and also 6.10 and 9.39 if we associate them with the third group).

[259] The disjunctive logical pattern noted earlier (Introd., n. 244) is especially relevant here.

[260] For this view, see Cooper 2004: 352, 364–8; also Rist 1983: 43. See also Cooper 2004: 346–63, esp. 349 (on 12.14) and 350 (on 10.6).

[261] See Asmis 1989: 2252. For Rist and Asmis, their treatment of this topic is linked with their general view that Marcus' approach is eclectic, rather than consistently Stoic.

[262] For this view, see Annas 2004: 114–18. For examples of Stoic ethics not explicitly linked with physics, see the summaries in Stobaeus and Cic. *Fin.* 3 (except for 3.72–3.73), by contrast with D. L. 7.87–7.89. For Annas's views on the branches of knowledge in Stoicism, see Annas 1993: 159–79, 2007; for debate on this question, see also Annas 1995, Cooper 2005; on versions of Stoic ethics, see Schofield 2003. See also Introd., text to nn. 163–4.

presentation in the *Meditations*, in which Stoic ethical principles are sometimes introduced on their own and sometimes in association with ideas about universal nature or drawn from Stoic logic. However, her explanation does not quite explain the problem that arises in connection with the last group of passages on this theme. The problem is not that Marcus deals here with ethics separately from physics. The difficulty is that he raises the question of the ethics–physics relationship (in posing the alternative 'providence or atoms' at all); but he then fails to address his own question, and proceeds as if he had given an answer reaffirming Stoic physics.[263] So, in the end, I think Marcus' handing of this theme in the third group of passages (as distinct from the first two groups) remains problematic, and cannot readily be seen as reflecting standard Stoic thinking.[264]

However, I am also not happy with the suggestion that Marcus, in these passages, accepts a 'second-best' intellectual understanding, and thus treats Stoicism as a 'religion' or 'rhetoric', rather than a philosophical system.[265] His repeated probing of the 'providence or atoms' question indicates that he is aiming at an understanding that embraces, and brings out the relationship between, Stoic physics and ethics. However, as he freely admits elsewhere, and, as is indicated in some features of the *Meditations* discussed earlier, his expertise in physics (and logic) is limited.[266] Hence, it would seem, he cannot provide the kind of argumentation that would settle decisively the question which world-view is true. This failure is not enough to shake his confidence in the Stoic ethical framework, which he never questions. But it means that he cannot provide the further confirmation of this framework by reference to physics he would like and has to take this aspect of Stoic theory on trust, relying on the arguments of others.[267] Recognition of this failure may underlie the defiantly heroic—or perhaps desperate—note in his reassertion of Stoic ethics in 6.44 and 12.14, despite not quite meeting his own challenge.[268] So I do not think it is quite right to suggest that Marcus is content with this

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[263] The problematic aspect of these passages is underlined in Cooper 2004: 346–51.

[264] See also the discussion in van Ackeren 2011: 435–42 of the views of Annas 2004 and Gill 2007a: 184–7.

[265] See Introd., n. 260. For related criticisms of the claim that Stoicism has become a kind of 'religion' for Marcus, see van Ackeren 2011: 432.

[266] See *Med.* refs. in Introd., n. 17, and text to nn. 237–41.

[267] For a similar view, see Annas 2004: 116, 118, Gill 2007a: 185–6, van Ackeren 2011: 442–3.

[268] Is this note partly shaped by another Stoic paradigm: that of the wise person enduring disaster, even the collapse of the world, with unwavering fortitude? For this paradigm, see e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 3.42, *Tusc.* 5.40–5.41, 5.81–5.82 (=LS 63 L–M), Hor. *Carm.* 3.31–3.38. But, if this is so, the move is a mistaken one. It is one thing to surmount disaster with your principles intact, and another to surmount the removal of those very principles.

solution in these cases; but he seems not, at this point, to see a further way of consolidating his ethical framework. However, as suggested earlier, I do not think we should overstate the significance of these passages, or treat them as characteristic of Marcus' position in general, or even on this theme. The treatment of the question in the first two groups is more straightforwardly compatible with mainstream Stoic thinking, as are the many passages where Marcus treats the ethics-physics interface in ways that reflect standard patterns of Stoic theory.

It is also important not to allow this relatively small number of puzzling or problematic passages to dominate our picture of Marcus' philosophical coherence and his grasp of Stoicism as reflected in the *Meditations*. In general, Marcus' core ethical project is both self-consistent and firmly based on central features of Stoic thinking. His use of this framework to address universal problems such as death and human transience is also coherent and recognizably Stoic in outlook. Much of his handling of the interface between ethics and logic or physics is also fully intelligible as an expression of Stoic ideas, both as regards psychology and the significance of the natural universe as a framework for ethical life. Some of the passages in the *Meditations* on the ethics–physics interface, admittedly, display a more uncertain handling of the material. This applies both to the third group of passages in the 'providence or atoms' theme, and to his treatment of the two features reviewed earlier, which draw moral conclusions from facts of nature and explore challenging questions relating to the natural world.[269] However, even in these cases, much of his thinking makes sense in Stoic terms. It is also impressive to see someone who is not a Stoic teacher or expert, and who is aware of not being so, probing the limits of his own philosophical under-standing, and doing so, as far as he can, in terms of the Stoic ethical frame-work and philosophical approach to which he is consistently committed. It is more striking when we recall the intense day-to-day demands and pres-sures to which he was subject, as someone both governing the empire and directing major military campaigns, and trying to do so, as far as we can tell, in line with the ethical principles he articulates in the *Meditations*.[270]

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[269] See Introd., text to nn. 234–41.
[270] On the biographical context, see Introd., text to nn. 11–12, 123–9.

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK 1

Book 1 differs from all the other books of the *Meditations* and requires a short introduction of its own. It is the only book with a unified structure and the entries (or 'chapters') all have a distinctive format, not found elsewhere in the work or in surviving ancient literature. The format, exemplified in its most simple version, is this: (1.1) 'From my grandfather Verus: goodness of character and freedom from anger (*to kaloēthes kai aorgēton*)'. We find in each case (1) a name or title, (2) 'from' (*para*), (3) an implied verb, and (4) one or more characteristics or qualities. In the case of (3), the verb, though translators sometimes supply one, is best left implicit. As becomes clear, the sense is not so much 'I have learnt' or 'acquired' this or that virtue; Marcus is very far from claiming that he has acquired all the virtues he sees expressed in the lives of those listed. The significance is closer to: 'I have learnt the value of', or 'I have recognized what a given virtue involves'.[1] Often, too, the sense is negative: 'I have learnt to try to avoid a given vice'. The fourth element is expressed by *to* ('the', neuter definite article), combined with a neuter adjective, used in Greek to express an abstract quality such as 'goodness of character'. Often, as here, one or more of the adjectives is negative, marked by the Greek marker of negation (the 'alpha privative'); many of the adjectives used are unusual or even unique. As the book unfolds, the chapters tend to become longer, while retaining the basic format, in a rather list-like fashion. In the longest one (1.16), although the format is retained, some clauses are incorporated in more standard narrative style ('he did this or that').[2]

The organization of the entries is interesting and more significant than it seems at first, as Hadot has shown.[3] At first glance, the order looks broadly chronological, with family members followed by tutors of various kinds, and then adult friends, before the concluding tributes to Marcus' adoptive father, Antoninus Pius, and the gods (1.16–1.17). However, surprisingly,

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[1] In two cases, 1.9.3 and 1.17.11, the sense of 'forming an idea' (*ennoia*) or 'impression' (*to phantazesthai*) is explicit, both times in connection with the Stoic ideal of 'the life according to nature' (LS 63 A–C).

[2] See Giavatto 2008: 140–7, 2012: 342–4; also Rutherford 1989: 91–2, Hadot and Luna 1998: lx–lxiii.

[3] See Hadot and Luna 1998: xli–xlvi.

Marcus cites philosophers, beginning with Rusticus (1.7–1.9) before teachers of language style or rhetoric (1.10–1.11), though this was not the normal order in Roman education or the order followed in Marcus' own case. Also, the group of adult friends (1.10–1.15) includes people who also taught Marcus philosophy or at least discussed it with him, namely Catulus, Severus, and Maximus. These variations show that the basis of the arrangement is not so much chronological as progressive in a broader sense. After family members, treated as early ethical models (1.1–1.4), Marcus outlines his gradual engagement with philosophy and its moral lessons (1.6–1.9), with 1.5 serving as an intermediate case. This is followed by a group (1.10–1.15) who include former teachers but who seem to be presented here as older friends and advisers. This prepares the way for the extended, climactic model, Antoninus Pius (1.16), and the (slightly differently conceived) list of benefits given by the gods (1.17). It is also worth noting that Marcus' listing is highly selective, including, for instance, only a few of his eighteen tutors and omitting leading political or intellectual figures in Marcus' life, such as Herodes Atticus and the emperor Hadrian, whom one might, in principle, have expected to have seen in such a list.[4]

We have very few firm indications of the date of the *Meditations* or of its various books.[5] However, it is generally supposed by scholars that Book 1 was written later than the other books, or at least than some of them. In 6.30 we find a short characterization of Antoninus, which makes better sense as a foretaste of 1.16 than as a sequel. Also in Book 6 there is a chapter (6.48) which appears to prefigure the whole programme of Book 1, that of encouraging oneself by dwelling on the 'images of the virtues displayed in the characters' of those Marcus has known, conceived as a group. So it seems possible that the idea of preparing—what we call—Book 1 may have occurred to Marcus in the course of writing the *Meditations*, though it is also likely that the book was composed at one time, as a connected unit. Whenever it was composed, the thematic relationship between Book 1 and the other books seems clear, at least in broad terms. Whereas most of the work is concerned to promote the author's ethical development, and is in this sense forward-looking, Book 1 looks backward, as Marcus reflects on the qualities of those who have helped to shape this development in the

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[4] On the historical background, see Champlin 1980: chs. 7–8, including relevant comment on Hadrian (1980: 95–6). See also (on Herodes and Hadrian), Hadot and Luna 1998: lx, clxxxii; (on Herodes), Rutherford 1989: 84–5.

[5] See Introd., text to n. 11. (All refs. to Introd. are to the main Introduction; the present discussion is cited as 'Introd. to Book 1'.)

past. In another way, however, such reflection also forms part of the ongoing programme of ethical self-improvement;[6] hence it made sense (to Marcus or his secretary after his death) to place this essay at the start of the notebook we call the *Meditations*.[7]

In exploring this book more fully, scholars have focused on two points highlighted by Rutherford (1989: 48): 'There is quite simply nothing else like Book 1 in the whole of classical literature. Even its links with the rest of the work have never been very satisfactorily established.' Rutherford and others have tried to explain the special character of the book, in part, by reference to points of similarity and difference with pre-existing genres of ancient writing. The most suggestive parallels are offered by biography, especially of an ethical or idealizing kind, and exemplary writing, of which there are both philosophical and non-philosophical versions. Book 1 is also sometimes seen as prefiguring the—as yet non-existent—genre of autobiography, especially the much later spiritual (religious and ethical) *Confessions* of Augustine.[8] The relationship to the rest of the *Meditations* is usually explained as suggested earlier, as supporting the project of self-improvement by referring back to the people in Marcus' past who have helped to shape the ideals towards which he urges himself in the rest of the work.

I now raise a rather different set of questions, though ones also designed to explain the distinctive character of Book 1 and its connection to the rest of the work. These questions centre on the special 'voice' of Book 1, the relationship between philosophy and other aspects of life, the selection of material, and what is involved in learning from examples. I aim to bring out what the book suggests about ethical development and how this relates to the project of self-improvement carried forward in the rest of the *Meditations*.

I begin with the question of the 'voice', or characteristic style and standpoint, of Book 1 and its relationship to the rest of the work. The idea that Marcus has a number of different voices comes out more clearly if we

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[6] See Rutherford 1989: 46–7, 94–6, Hadot and Luna 1998: liii–lx, van Ackeren 2011: 120–6.

[7] For textual evidence, in the first edition and a surviving manuscript, that our Book 2 was originally Book 1, see Farquharson 1944: lxix–lxxiii, Hadot and Luna 1998: xlvi–liii, Männlein-Robert 2012: 369.

[8] See Rutherford 1989: 49–66, 110–11, Hadot and Luna 1998: lvii–lix, van Ackeren 2011: 80–7, 94–101; see also van Ackeren 2011: 87–94, 105–14, on the broader question whether *Med.* as a whole constitutes a kind of autobiography.

compare Marcus' letters to Fronto with *Meditations* 2–12. The letters, in their verbal style, range of themes and preoccupations, and attitudes, show someone who seems to be a more typical member of the Roman ruling élite than we might expect from the *Meditations*. For instance, the letters show a strong, recurrent, and engaged interest in the physical health of the two correspondents and their families. By contrast, the *Meditations* view such things with detachment, presenting them as 'matters of indifference', in comparison with the absolute value of virtue. Although, as I have suggested elsewhere, we can discern an underlying unity of attitude between the two works, in this and other respects, the voice we hear in each case is markedly different.[9] The contrast between Book 1 and the other books is more nuanced; but there are differences. The main one (though not easy to define exactly) is this. In Books 2–12, Marcus speaks with a purely philosophical voice, whereas Book 1 comments—from the outside, as it were—on philosophy as one of a number of sources of ethical inspiration. In the other books, Marcus employs a distinctive idiom of reflective self-address which is strongly and obviously informed by Stoic ideas and language. In Book 1, the format and style is not specifically Stoic, or indeed philosophical in character, even though Stoic language and ideas form a strong underlying presence. Both in Book 1 and the other books, the focus of interest is uniformly moral; but the range of moral themes differs. In Book 1, this is limited to qualities of character and modes of behaviour, especially social style, whereas in the other books those themes are intertwined with a much broader range of topics, including death and human transience, cosmic and psychological ideas and images. A further difference is that of tone and stance; whereas the other books express a powerful sense of self-criticism, self-exhortation, and, sometimes, speculative probing of the limits of Marcus' understanding, Book 1 expresses a more uniformly positive, commendatory attitude. Although all these differences can, perhaps, be explained by the different functions of the respective parts of the work, they are worth exploring. In a sense, the voice of Book 1 is intermediate between that of the letters and the rest of the *Meditations*. It is also a book which, again rather more than the rest of the work, implies or raises more questions about its content and objectives than it pursues.

  I take up first the question of the relationship between philosophy and other moral influences in Book 1. First, as outlined earlier, some of the influential figures are philosophers (in 1.7–1.9, and 1.13–1.15), but others

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[9] See van Ackeren 2011: 98–9 and Fleury 2012: 68–70, 72–4; see also Gill 2012b: 36–45.

are not. Marcus' progressive engagement with philosophy and its ethical lessons, is, certainly, one of the themes of the book.[10] But this co-exists (in a way that goes beyond what we mostly find in the other books) with recognition of other moral influences, notably that of his adoptive father, Antoninus Pius, who is the central role-model in the whole book.[11] Marcus also signals, in connection with Antoninus, a rather complex relationship between philosophy and other sources of moral authority. Antoninus, though not presented as strongly influenced by philosophy, is said to be able to discriminate between those who are or are not 'truly' philosophers, presumably on grounds of ethical character or advice offered. Also, Antoninus is compared to Socrates, who is often used elsewhere as a Stoic paradigm and exemplar of wisdom, in his attitude to physical enjoyment. Some of his other characteristics, notably acuteness in intellectual scrutiny and emotional consistency, evoke Stoic descriptions of ideal virtue or wisdom.[12] Finally, there are repeated suggestions that philosophy is only of value in so far as it promotes, or is consistent with, the kind of personal qualities described elsewhere in Book 1, not all of which are presented as deriving from philosophical sources.[13]

What follows from this presentation of Marcus' view of the relationship between philosophy, especially Stoicism, and (non-Stoic) real-life influences on his ethical development? In pursuing this question, it may be helpful to refer to a Senecan letter (120) on how we come to an understanding of the good. Although Seneca, explicitly, presupposes a Stoic theoretical framework for this process, he points out that the models on which we draw to form this understanding may be real, specific figures. In illustrating this process, Seneca refers to some of the well-known exemplary figures of the Roman past, such as Horatius Cocles, as well as people we may have encountered in our lives, who can offer what Seneca describes as the 'likeness of virtue'.[14] In Book 1, Marcus seems to be underlining a related point in a different way, more, or more explicitly, than in the rest of the *Meditations*. As well as showing (in 1.7–1.9, 1.13–1.15) the progressive influence of the Stoic ethical framework presupposed in the *Meditations*, he also presents, as compatible with this framework, the way that specific

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[10] See esp. 1.6.5, 1.6.7, 1.7–1.9, 1.15.

[11] The shorter tribute to Antoninus in 6.30 is exceptional in Books 2–12.

[12] See 1.16.18, 1.16.30; also 1.16.9, 1.16.29, 1.16.31; see also Giavatto 2008: 78–80.

[13] See 1.7.2, 1.17.22; on this theme, see Introd., text to n. 17.

[14] Sen. *Ep.* 120.5–120.13, esp. start of 120.8 ('likeness of virtue', *imaginem virtutis*), compare *Med.* 6.48. See also Inwood 2007: 325–8.

people (not necessarily Stoics or indeed philosophers) exhibited the qualities that helped to form his understanding of virtue.[15] Marcus' selection of individuals also highlights another point, a rather obvious one perhaps, but not one brought out much in Books 2–12. He was not a full-time philosopher; indeed, from the age of seventeen, after his adoption by Antoninus in 138, he was in effect a full-time politician. It is natural that, although he gives prominence in Book 1 to philosophical, especially Stoic, figures, he should also stress the ethical influence of the adoptive father in whose household he spent twenty-three years preparing for the imperial role held in 161–80.[16] These features of his life seem to have made him especially aware of the compatibility of the Stoic framework and real-life influences which Seneca stresses in a more theorized form in Letter 120.

A related question can be raised about the exemplary format and content of Book 1. Is this shaped more by Stoic or non-Stoic patterns? Ethical exemplarity is a prominent aspect of Plutarchean biography and much Roman historiography. Plutarch especially articulates the idea that biography, in presenting figures of the past as exemplars of virtue and vice, helps the reader to take forward his own ethical development.[17] Ethical exemplarity is a particularly prominent and pervasive feature of Roman culture, with some writings (that of Valerius Maximus, for instance) consisting solely of exemplary stories and their moral interpretation.[18] But exemplarity is also a strong and recurrent feature of much Stoic ethical writing, at least from Cicero onwards, and is pervasive in practical ethical works by Seneca and Epictetus.[19] Can we, then, determine whether Book 1 is shaped more by Stoic or non-Stoic patterns of exemplarity? Doing so is not particularly easy. The main topics of Book 1, that is, qualities of ethical character and modes of behaviour, especially social style, displaying these qualities, are shared themes of Stoic ethics and exemplarity and other

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[15] See further on this point Gill 2012b: 45–52.

[16] On Marcus' life, see Introd., text to nn. 9–13.

[17] See Plu. *Aem.* 1, *Demetr.* 1.3–1.6, *Alex.* 1; Liv. *Praefatio* 10; Tac. *Ann.* 14.64.3, *Hist.* 1.3.1. See also Rutherford 1989: 55–6, 110, Duff 1999: ch. 1.

[18] See Langlands 2008 on Valerius; also Chaplin 2000 and Roller 2009 on exemplarity in Roman historiography.

[19] For some examples, see Introd. to Book 1, n. 22, and Rutherford 1989: 59–64. Sedley 1999b: 150–1, suggests that exemplarity was not typical of early (Hellenistic) Stoicism, but appeared at the time of Panaetius (*c.*185– *c.*110 BC), perhaps under the influence of Roman thought-patterns. See also van Ackeren 2011: 120–6, on Senecan evidence (*Ep.* 95.65–95.66) that Posidonius (*c.*135–*c.* 50 BC) developed the technique of *ethologia* (or *characterismos*), i.e. illustrating the nature of the virtues with examples of appropriate behaviour (Sen. *Ep.* 95.65–95.66), and on Marcus' adoption of this technique.

genres, such as Plutarchean biography and Roman historiography.[20] Also, the qualities exemplified in Book 1 are consistent with Stoic ethical principles. For instance, there is a conspicuous avoidance of the theme of worldly success, even in the form of the well-being of one's family and friends.[21] The focus is wholly on what are, in technical Stoic terms, 'appropriate (that is, virtuous) selection between indifferents',[22] and on the qualities of understanding and character that underlie such selection. Similarly, much Plutarchean biography or exemplary writing of the kind found in Valerius Maximus also focuses on qualities of ethical character, rather than external success, and such writings differ in this respect from genres such as panegyric or indeed much kingship oration. Plutarch, for instance, in a well-known passage, highlights the importance of seemingly trivial comments and actions, rather than great military exploits, as indicators of ethical character; and the selection of illustrative behaviour in Book 1 of the *Meditations* is also, perhaps surprisingly, small-scale and domestic in type.[23] So, in this respect too, one might see Book 1 as a deliberate fusion of philosophical and non-philosophical (or Stoic and non-Stoic) modes of exemplarity, reflecting the compatibility seen by Marcus between the Stoic theoretical framework and real-life ethical norms.

Comparison with Seneca's treatment in Letter 120 can also help us to recognize an underlying feature of Book 1 which is not accentuated by Marcus' own presentation. Seneca stresses that the process of using exemplars to form an understanding of virtue, including people one knows at first hand, is not a purely passive or automatic process. It involves critical selection and rejection, as well as comparison between different models, as

[20]   See Introd. to Book 1, n. 17. For the importance in both areas of (what I call) a 'character-approach' (i.e. one centred on ethical judgement), see Gill 1983: 470–3. Also, the clipped, epigrammatic, listing of characteristics (especially in 1.16) evokes the (judgemental) character-sketch that is a notable feature of Roman historiography, esp. in Sallust and Tacitus.

[21]   An exception: one of the benefits of the gods is presented as the fact that his children were not physically or mentally deformed (1.17.7). More typical, however, is this comment on Apollonius (1.8.3): 'to be always the same, in severe pain, at the loss of a child, during long illnesses', i.e. a focus on ethical responses to such events rather than the events themselves.

[22]   See LS 58; also Introd., text to nn. 87, 92, 95, 101. Much earlier Stoic use of exemplars is designed (more obviously than in *Med.* 1) to illustrate the distinction between virtue and indifferents. See e.g. Cicero's use of Regulus, the climactic exemplar of this distinction in *Off.* 3 (*Off.* 3.99–3.111), also Sen. *Ep.*120.6–120.7, Epict. *Diss.* 1.1.18–1.1.30, 1.2.9–1.2.22.

[23]   See Plu. *Alex.* 1, also Duff 1999: 14–17. On the relationship between Plutarchean biography and *Med.* 1, see also Comm. (main note) on 1.16. On the absence from *Med.* 1 of the kind of great achievements found in panegyric or much kingship oration, see Rutherford 1989: 49–55, 96–103.

one gradually builds up a better comprehension of the good.[24] Implied in Seneca's comments—though, rather oddly, not articulated in his letter—is the fact that, according to Stoic theory, most or all of the people one meets will necessarily fall far short of the ideal wise person who is the only full exemplar of virtue. A related implication is that, in Stoicism, the process of achieving a full knowledge of what virtue involves is co-extensive with achieving such virtue ('wisdom') oneself, and so it will be, for virtually all of us, a life-long and incomplete one.[25]

Book 1 of the *Meditations* seems, on the face of it, to take a simpler view of the process of learning by examples than is suggested either by Seneca. The rather mechanical format employed seems to imply that a given person, straightforwardly, communicated to Marcus the recognition of the value of a given quality, exhibited in behaviour sometimes recounted in some detail. However, it is also clear that this impression is, to some extent, misleading. Marcus' resumé of a life-long set of influences (which is, overall, quite short) is, in fact, drastically selective and incorporates many implicit choices about who and what to include or exclude.[26] His brief comments on Fronto show this clearly; he chooses just two features of ethical significance in what we know from the letters was an extended, and often very close, relationship.[27] Also, if we combine with the exemplary format the theme of progressively increasing ethical understanding (implied especially in 1.7–1.9), a further point emerges. What Marcus tells himself now about the ethical quality or influence of a given person is not necessarily identical with what he recognized at the relevant time during his life.[28] We can combine this idea with the sense, strongly marked elsewhere in the *Meditations*, of life as a continuing process of search for full understanding of what constitutes virtue and how to embody this in one's

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[24] Sen. *Ep.* 120.4–120.5, 120.8–120.9; see also Cic. *Fin.* 3.33–3.34 (=LS 60 D), Inwood 2007: 324–6.

[25] The status of the ideal exemplar of virtue in Sen. *Ep.* 120.10–120.14 is not defined: is it someone we could have met or simply an ideal? Inwood 2005: 294–6 suggests we are meant to think of a real person (e.g. Socrates or Cato), but not someone we might ever meet or have met. On the linkage between the (potentially life-long) process of ethical development and coming to understand the good or virtue, see Jackson-McCabe 2004.

[26] On the exclusion of Herodes Atticus and Hadrian, for instance, see Introd. to Book 1, text to n. 4.

[27] See Comm. on 1.11. Langlands 2011 (compare Langlands 2006: chs. 2–3) suggests that, in Roman practice in general, the process of drawing moral conclusions from exemplars involved much more active and independent interpretation than is often supposed.

[28] For an analogous point, made about the kind of inferences drawn by adult philosophers about the natural instincts of infants (in the 'cradle argument), see Brunschwig 1986.

life and character. Marcus' reflection on his past ethical influences is, in effect, part of an ongoing ethical journey, one stimulated, perhaps, by the quest built into the rest of the *Meditations* (Introd., text to nn. 83–5).

On the basis of these observations, I return to the questions posed earlier: what makes Book 1 a unique text in extant ancient writing and how does it relate to Books 2–12? On the first question, the book represents a distinctive combination of Stoic thinking about ethical development, and self-development, and broader Greco-Roman ideas about ethical learning through exemplarity. The picture of ethical progress suggested by the book reflects some distinctively Stoic ideas about development as 'appropriation', discussed earlier.[29] Notably absent from the book is the (Platonic-Aristotelian) idea that ethical character is shaped by a combination of innate qualities, habituative upbringing, and, based on the other two elements, intellectual education.[30] Ethical influences, at all stages of maturity, whether from family-members, tutors, or friends, or someone holding more than one such role, are characterized in purely rational terms, as enabling Marcus to recognize the importance of a given quality and the behaviour that expresses this. Also, the features described match those identified in Stoic accounts of development both in the individual and social strands of this process and in the interplay between these. The focus in Book 1, as noted earlier, is not on securing what Stoicism describes as 'preferred indifferents' but on ethically based selection and on acting in a way that embodies virtuous qualities.[31] There is also a marked emphasis on expressing these qualities in social action within specific domestic or political frameworks, in line with one strand in Stoic thinking about social appropriation.[32] However, although the book reflects specifically Stoic ideas about ethical development, it fuses these, as discussed earlier, with wider cultural patterns of thinking about ethical development, notably about ethical learning through exemplarity and the moral significance of specific individuals. Exceptional though this combination is, it does not, I think, involve actual inconsistency or incoherence; indeed, arguably, the two sides reinforce each other. On the question of the relationship between Book 1

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[29] See Introd., text to nn. 80–90.

[30] See Introd., text to n. 81.

[31] See Introd., text to nn. 86–97.

[32] That is, the strand focused on localized engagement, rather than cosmopolitanism (though both strands figure in *Med.* 2–12); note esp. 1.14.2 and its distinctively Roman conception of the best political order. See further Introd., text to nn. 116–22, also nn. 107–9 on the interplay between individual and social development.

and the other books, I think it is now clearer how this works. The retrospective summary of past ethical influences in Book 1 seems both to be inspired by the forward-looking project of self-improvement in the other books and to form a supporting, if distinct, dimension of this process. Despite the differences between Book 1 and the other books discussed earlier here, including the less overtly philosophical approach, the book reflects closely what I described as the *Meditations*' core ethical project of self-improvement (Introd., text to nn. 78–85), and informs this in its own distinctive way.

NOTE ON THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

For the Translation and Commentary, the Greek text used for Book 1 is the revised Budé (Belles Lettres) edition: P. Hadot and C. Luna (eds.), *Marc Aurèle: Écrits pour lui-même. Tome 1* (Paris, 1998). A second revised Budé volume is in preparation for Books 2–6, edited by J.-B. Gourinat and M. Ceporina, based on preliminary work done by the late P. Hadot. For Books 2–6, the text used is the Teubner edition, J. Dalfen (ed.), *Marci Aurelii Antoni ad se ipsum libri xii* (Leipzig, 1987, 1st edn. 1979). Departures from these texts are noted in the Commentary on the relevant passages. These are relatively few in the case of Book 1, but more numerous in the case of Books 2–6. Dalfen's text is notable for the large number of emendations, and I have not followed him in all these. See further M. Ceporina, 'The Meditations', in M. van Ackeren (ed.), *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius* (Oxford, 2012), 45–61, esp. 56–7 on the textual transmission of the *Meditations* and on recent editions. Note also M. Ceporina, 'Prolegomeno a un nuovo testo di Marco Aurelio "A se stesso" I–VI'. University of Padua Laurea thesis (Padua, 2008), esp. 57–60, listing Dalfen's main emendations. I have also referred to other editions, cited in the Commentary, especially that of A. S. L. Farquharson, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1944), and the earlier complete Budé edition of A. I. Trannoy, *Marc-Aurèle: Pensées* (Paris, 1953).

The translation is designed to be as accurate as possible, while also providing an equivalent in modern educated English for the style (and range of styles) of the *Meditations*. I have generally followed the sentence-structure and punctuation of the edition used. I have not reproduced the frequent use of connectives (such as 'and', 'but', 'for') which form a standard part of Greek prose style but are not characteristic of modern English. Although Marcus' style is largely non-technical, it does include some typical Stoic vocabulary or evokes that vocabulary in ways I have tried to reproduce. Where possible, I have translated standard Stoic terms with the same English term, such as 'ruling centre' for *hēgemonikon*, 'motive' for *hormē*, 'impression' for *phantasia*. *Psuchē* is always a difficult word to translate because it has a range of meanings which do not match those of any single English term. I translate as 'mind', 'life' (or 'vitality' or 'animation'), 'soul', or 'character', according to the context. Where it may be helpful, I have noted the Greek term used (given in transliterated form, as here) in the Commentary on the relevant passage.

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Translation

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Book 1

[1] From my grandfather Verus: goodness of character and freedom from anger.

[2] From what I heard or remember about my natural father: modesty and manliness.

[3] (1) From my mother: piety, the inclination to give generously and to hold back not only from doing wrong but even from thinking of doing so; (2) also simplicity in way of life, quite unlike the wealthy life-style.

[4] (1) From my great-grandfather: not to have attended schools open to the public; (2) to have had good teachers at home; (3) and to have realized that one should spend lavishly on this kind of thing.

[5] (1) From my tutor: not to have become a supporter of the Greens or the Blues, the Round Shields or the Long Shields; (2) to put up with hardship, to have few needs, to work with my own hands; (3) to mind my own business; (4) and to be reluctant to listen to slander.

[6] (1) From Diognetus: not to take trivial things seriously; (2) to disbelieve the stories told by miracle-mongers and magicians about spells and exorcism of demons and such-like; (3) not to hold cock-fights or to get excited about that sort of thing; (4) to be receptive to plain speaking; (5) to have become familiar with philosophy; (6) to have attended the lectures first of Baccheius, then Basilides, and Marcian; (7) to have written dialogues when still a child; (8) and to have wanted a camp-bed and animal-skin blanket and the other things that form part of the Spartan life-style.

[7] (1) From Rusticus: to have formed an impression of the need for correction and therapy of my character; (2) not being diverted towards sophistic ambition, or writing on purely theoretical matters, or delivering little

sermons or writing stylish and imaginary descriptions of 'the ascetic' and 'the benefactor'; (3) and to have kept away from oratory and poetic composition and clever talk; (4) not to parade round the house dressed like a philosopher or doing things like that; (5) to write letters in a simple style, like those written at Sinuessa from him to my mother; (6) to those who have angered or offended one to be ready to respond positively and to make things up again, as soon as they want to come back into the relationship; (7) to read with precision, and not be satisfied with a generalized understanding, nor agree quickly with those who are just chattering away; (8) and to have been introduced to the discourses of Epictetus, of which he gave me a copy from his own library.

[8] (1) From Apollonius: freedom and unequivocally leaving nothing to the dice of fortune; (2) to take as one's guide nothing but reason, not even for a moment; (3) to be always the same, in severe pain, at the loss of a child, during long illnesses; (4) to have seen clearly by a living example that the same person can be both very intense and yet also relaxed; (5) not to become impatient in giving explanations; (6) to have seen a person who clearly regarded as the least of his qualities his mastery and facility in communicating theoretical matters; (7) and to have learnt how to accept apparent favours from friends without being influenced by them or disregarding them insensitively.

[9] (1) From Sextus: kindliness; (2) the example of a household governed by fatherly authority; (3) the idea of living according to nature; (4) seriousness without affectation; (5) perceptiveness in gauging his friends' needs; (6) patience with ordinary people and those whose opinions are not based on reflection; (7) the ability to fit in with everyone, so that his company was more pleasant than any kind of flattery, while at the same time he aroused the greatest respect from those who were with him; (8) a secure and methodical discovery and organization of the principles necessary for life; (9) never to give the impression of anger or any other passion but to be at once completely free of passion and yet full of affection for other people; (10) to speak well of others without making a fuss about it; (11) and deep learning without ostentation.

[10] From Alexander the language teacher: not to be over-critical, or to comment in a carping manner when someone makes an error of vocabulary, syntax, or pronunciation, but rather to suggest adroitly just the right word which should have been used, in the form of an answer or

confirmation or discussion of the subject itself rather than the term used, or by some other tactful indirect prompting like that.

[11] From Fronto: to understand the malice, capriciousness, and hypocrisy that are characteristic of absolute rule, and that generally those whom we call patricians are rather lacking in natural affection.

[12] From Alexander the Platonist: rarely and only when necessary to say to someone or write in a letter that, 'I am too busy', or by this kind of behaviour to make continual excuses for not meeting the obligations that go along with our social relationships, pleading the pressure of current business.

[13] (1) From Catulus: not to ignore a friend's criticism, even if he is criticizing you unreasonably, but to try to set things back on a normal footing; (2) to commend one's teachers in a full-hearted way, as is recorded about Domitius and Athenodotus; (3) and genuine love for children.

[14] (1) From Severus: love of family, love of truth, and love of justice; (2) the fact that through him I have come to understand Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dio, Brutus, and have grasped the idea of a state based on equality before the law, which is administered according to the principles of equality and freedom of speech, and of a monarchy which values above all the liberty of its subjects; (3) also from him, evenness and consistency in his respect for philosophy; (4) readiness to help others and to give generously; (5) optimism and confidence in the affection of friends; (6) frankness with anyone of whom he disapproved; (7) and that his friends never needed to guess what he did or did not want, since this was obvious.

[15] (1) From Maximus: to be master of oneself and not carried this way and that; (2) to be cheerful under all circumstances, including illness; (3) a character with a harmonious blend of gentleness and dignity; (4) readiness to tackle the task in hand without complaint; (5) the confidence everyone had that whatever he said he meant and whatever he did was not done with bad intent; (6) never to be astonished or panic-stricken, and never to be hurried or to hang back or be at a loss or downcast or cringing or on the other hand angry or suspicious; (7) to be ready to help or forgive, and to be truthful; (8) to give the impression of someone whose character is naturally upright rather than having undergone correction; (9) the fact that no one could have thought that Maximus looked down on him, or could

have presumed to suppose that he was better than Maximus; (10) and to have great personal charm.

[16] (1) From my father: to be gentle and to hold immovably to judgements made after full examination; (2) to be free from empty conceit about conventional honours; (3) being capable of hard work and stamina; (4) a readiness to listen to those with any proposal for the public benefit; (5) unwavering in rewarding each person according to his worth; (6) knowing by experience when one needs to tighten one's grip and when to relax; (7) his having made an end of love affairs with boys; (8) consideration for people's feelings; not requiring his friends always to have dinner with him or to be obliged to accompany him on his travels, but if people were kept away by some need they would always find his attitude the same; (9) a readiness to make precise enquiries at sessions of the council, and to pursue a point, so that you could not say, 'he gave up the enquiry, satisfied with first impressions'; (10) his being loyal to his friends and never fickle or infatuated; (11) his self-sufficiency in all things and serene expression; (12) thinking about things well ahead and planning even the smallest matter in advance, but without making a fuss about this; (13) the check he put on public applause and every kind of flattery in his reign; (14) his continual care for the needs of the empire, and stewardship of its resources, and his willingness to put up with criticism from some people of his conduct in these areas; (15) as regards the gods, his freedom from superstitious fears, and as regards people, his avoidance of populism or wanting to please at any price or humouring the mob; but being sober and steady in all things and never tasteless or wanting novelty for its own sake.

(16) As for things that make for the comfort of life, of which fortune provided plenty, to use them without showing off but also without apology so that he could enjoy them without self-consciousness if they were there but did not miss them if they were not; (17) the fact that no one would ever describe him as a sophist, obsequiously servile, or a pedant, but as a man who was mature, experienced, impervious to flattery, capable of taking charge of his own affairs and those of others.

(18) Also, the fact that he respected genuine philosophers, but as regards the other kind, he was neither unduly disparaging nor easily taken in by them; (19) his sociability and good sense of humour, but one not taken to excess; (20) the fact that he took care of his body in a moderate way, but was neither over-protective of his life nor focused on good looks nor neglectful of himself, so that, thanks to his own attention to himself he had least need of doctors, medicines or internal and external applications; (21) most of all,

his readiness to give way without jealousy to those who had a special
competence in, for instance, expressiveness of language, or study of laws
and customs, or some other subject, and his enthusiastic support for them
to become well known for their own area of special excellence; his doing
everything in line with tradition—but without trying to present himself as
someone who followed tradition; (22) also the fact that he was not change-
able or volatile, but inclined to stay in the same places or practices; (23)
how, after severe bouts of headache, he was always fresh and ready to return
to his usual activities; (24) that he did not have many secrets, but only a few
that were exceptional and only about public business; (25) his good sense
and moderation in providing public shows, constructing public buildings,
distributions, and things like that—the acts of someone who kept his eye on
what needed to be done, and not on his own fame for having done it; (26) he
was not one to take baths at unusual times, nor was he over-fond of building;
nor did he give special attention to his food, or to the material and colour of
what he wore, of the beauty of people's bodies; (27) the fact that his clothes
were brought up from the villa down at Lorium; and most of his way of life
at Lanuvium; (28) and how he treated the tax-collector at Tusculum who
apologized; and all the opportunities he took for that kind of behaviour;
(29) that he was neither harsh nor implacable nor rabid, nor was he the sort
of man who, as they say, 'gets in a sweat' about things, but everything was
planned out and considered as if at leisure, in a calm, orderly way, which
was also vigorous and consistent; (30) what is reported of Socrates would
also fit him: that he was able either to hold back from, or enjoy, the things
that many people are too weak to abstain from or too self-indulgent in
enjoying; (31) to show strength or endurance, and to show restraint in each
case is the sign of a man of well-balanced and indomitable character, as he
showed during the illness of Maximus.

[17] (1) From the gods: to have had good grandparents, good parents, a
good sister, and good teachers, good companions, relatives, and friends,
almost without exception; (2) that I did not blunder into offending any of
them, despite having the sort of disposition that might have led me to do
this under certain circumstances; but by the favour of the gods, no combi-
nation of circumstances arose which would have put me to the test; (3) that
I was not brought up any longer than I was by my grandfather's partner; (4)
that I kept the flower of my innocence and did not play a man's part until
the right age or even rather later; (5) that I was placed under a ruler and
father who was to rid me of all arrogance and who led me to understand
that it is possible to live in a court without needing body-guards or

ceremonial robes or flaming torches or statues or any other such trappings of pomp, but that one can restrict oneself to something very close to the style of a private citizen, without losing any dignity or effectiveness in doing the things that a leader needs to do for the public good; (6) that I had the kind of brother who, by his character, was able to stimulate me to take care of myself, but who at the same time heartened me by his respect and affection; (7) that my children were born neither mentally or physically disabled.

(8) That I did not make more progress in oratory, poetry, and other pursuits, in which I might perhaps have become absorbed, if I felt this was the right pathway for me; (9) that I was quick to promote my tutors to the public offices that I thought they wanted, and that I did not put them off, because they were still young, with the hope of doing so later; (10) that I came to know Apollonius, Rusticus, and Maximus; (11) that I formed an impression, vividly and often, of what it means to live a life according to nature so that, as regards the gods, and their external influences, their assistance, and their purposes, nothing prevents me from living a life according to nature right now—that I still fall short of this comes from my own fault and the fact that I fail to take note of the reminders, and, one might say, teachings of the gods.

(12) That my body has held out so long in a life such as mine; (13) that I never touched Benedicta and Theodotus; and that, when later I did feel erotic passion, I was cured of this; (14) that, though I was often angry with Rusticus, I did nothing further, which I would have regretted; (15) that my mother, though she was to die young, still spent her last years with me; (16) that, whenever I wanted to help someone who was poor or in need of something, I was never told that I did not have the money to do this; (17) and that I did not fall into the same need myself so as have to receive this from someone else; (18) that my wife is as she is, so submissive, so affectionate, so straightforward; (19) that I have been well provided with tutors for my children; (20) that remedies have been given to me through dreams, especially for avoiding spitting blood and dizziness; (21) the fact that at Caieta I had a kind of oracle; (22) that, when I first wanted to do philosophy, I did not fall in with any sophist, or settle down to pore over books, or analyse syllogisms, or occupy myself with the study of celestial phenomena; (23) all these things need the help of the gods and good luck.

Book 2

Written among the Quadi on the River Gran.

[1] (1) Say to yourself first thing in the morning: I shall meet with people who are meddling, ungrateful, violent, treacherous, envious, and unsociable. (2) They are subject to these faults because of their ignorance of what is good and bad. (3) But I have recognized the nature of the good and seen that it is the right, and the nature of the bad and seen that it is the wrong, and the nature of the wrongdoer himself, and seen that he is related to me, not because he has the same blood or seed, but because he shares in the same mind and portion of divinity. So I cannot be harmed by any of them, as no one will involve me in what is wrong. Nor can I be angry with my relative or hate him. (4) We were born for cooperation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of upper and lower teeth. (5) So to work against each other is contrary to nature; and resentment and rejection count as working against someone.

[2] (1) What makes up this being of mine is flesh, and a bit of breath and the ruling centre. (2) Put down your books—do not distract yourself with them any more; that is not granted to you. As if you were on the point of death, despise the flesh—just blood, bones, and the network of nerves, veins, and arteries. (3) Consider what sort of thing breath is: a stream of air, and not always the same, but at each moment belched out and drawn in again. (4) The third part of you is the ruling centre. Look at it this way: you are an old man; no longer allow this part of you to be enslaved any more; no longer allow it to be tugged this way and that like a puppet by each unsociable motive; no longer allow it to be discontented with its present fate or to flinch from its future one.

[3] (1) The works of the gods are full of providence and the works of fortune are not separate from nature or the interweaving and intertwining of the things governed by providence. Everything flows from there. (2) Further

factors are necessity and the benefit of the whole universe, of which you are a part. What is brought by the nature of the whole and what maintains that nature is good for each part of nature. Just as the changes in the elements maintain the universe so too do the changes in the compounds. (3) Let these things satisfy you; let these always be your doctrines. Give up your thirst for books, so that you do not die grumbling on, but positively, genuinely, full-heartedly grateful to the gods.

[4] (1) Remember how long you have been putting this off and how often, when given a period of grace by the gods, you have not used it. (2) But now it is high time to recognize what is the universe of which you form a part and who is the director of the universe of whom you constitute an offshoot and to see that there is a limit set to your time and if you do not use it to clear the fog from your mind, the moment will be gone and you will be gone, and the opportunity will not come again.

[5] (1) At every hour, give your full concentration, as a Roman and a man, to carrying out the task in hand with a scrupulous and unaffected dignity and affectionate concern for others and freedom and justice, and give yourself space from all other concerns. (2) You will give yourself this if you carry out each act as if it were the last of your life, freed from all randomness and passionate deviation from the rule of reason and from pretence and self-love and dissatisfaction with what has been allotted to you. (3) You see how few things you need to master to be able to live a smoothly flowing and god-fearing life; the gods will ask no more from someone who maintains these principles.

[6] (1) You are doing violence to yourself, violence, my mind; and you will have no more opportunity for treating yourself with honour. (2) Life for each of us is short. This life of yours is almost completed, though you do not respect yourself, but place your own well-being in the minds of other people.

[7] (1) Do external events distract you in some way? Then give yourself the space to learn some good new lesson and stop wandering aimlessly. (2) But now you must be careful to avoid another kind of wandering around. Foolish too, and in their actions, are those who have been exhausted by life and who have no aim to which they can direct every motive and, in fact, every thought.

[8] You don't often see people being unhappy because they don't pay attention to what is going on in someone else's mind; but those who

don't follow closely the movements of their own mind will necessarily be unhappy.

[9] One should always keep in mind these things: what the nature of the whole is, and what my nature is, and how my nature is related to that of the whole, and what kind of part it is of what kind of whole, and that no one can prevent me from always doing and saying what is in accordance with nature of which I am a part.

[10] (1) Theophrastus speaks like a true philosopher when, comparing wrongdoings (as people rather commonly do make such comparisons), he says that it is more serious to go wrong through desire than through anger. (2) When someone is angry, he seems to turn his back on reason with a certain kind of pain and an unconscious contraction of the heart; but when someone goes wrong because of desire and is then overpowered by pleasure he somehow seems more self-indulgent and more unmanly in his wrong-doing. (3) Theophrastus then speaks rightly and as a philosopher should when he says that wrongdoing that involves pleasure deserves more blame than that which involves pain. Generally speaking, the latter case seems to be one where someone has had wrong done to him first, and has been forced to become angry through pain, while in the former case he has set out of his own accord to do wrong, driven to do what he does by desire.

[11] (1) In all your actions, words, and thoughts, be aware that it is possible that you may depart from life at any time. (2) But leaving the human race is nothing to be afraid of, if the gods exist; they would not involve you in anything bad. And if they do not exist or have no concern for human affairs, why should I live in a universe empty of gods and empty of providence? (3) But the gods do exist and have concern for human affairs and have placed it wholly in the power of human beings never to meet what is truly bad. As for the other things, if any of them had been bad, they would have taken measures also to ensure that it was open to everyone not to meet that. (4) If something does not make a person worse, how could it make his life worse? (5) The nature of the whole could not have overlooked these things, either through ignorance or, while knowing, because it was unable to prevent them or put them right. Nor could it have made so great a mistake, either through lack of power or lack of skill, as to allow good and bad things to happen to good and bad people alike without discrimination. (6) But in fact, death and life, fame and lack of fame, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty—all these things happen to

good and bad people alike, though they are neither right nor wrong; therefore, they are not good or bad.

[12] (1) How quickly all things vanish, both the bodies themselves in the universe and the memories of them in time; what is the nature of all the things that we perceive, especially those that seduce us by pleasure or frighten us with pain or are celebrated with empty pride; how cheap these things are and despicable and shoddy and perishable and dead—these questions are for the power of the mind to determine. (2) Also—what these people are whose opinions and voices produce celebrity and its absence. (3) And what death is, and that, if one looks at it in isolation and uses analysis of the concept to dissolve the false impressions that surround it, he will realize that it is nothing but a function of nature; and if anyone is frightened of a function of nature, he is a mere child. But this is not only a function of nature but also beneficial to it. (4) And how a human being makes contact with god, and with what part of himself, and when that part of the person is in what condition.

[13] (1) Nothing is more pathetic than the person who makes a circuit of everything and, as the poet says, 'searches into the depths of the earth', and probes by indications what is going on in the minds of his neighbours, but fails to realize that it is enough to hold on to the guardian spirit within himself and to give true service to this. (2) This service is to keep it pure from passion, randomness, and discontent with whatever comes from gods and human beings. (3) What comes from gods deserves our reverence because of their goodness; what comes from human beings is dear to us because they are our relatives, but also sometimes in a certain way it deserves our pity because of their ignorance of what is good and bad; this is no less a disability than the inability to distinguish black from white.

[14] (1) Even if you were going to live for three thousand years or ten times as long, still remember that no one loses any life other than the one he is living now or lives any life other than the one he loses. (2) So the longest and the shortest amount to the same thing. (3) The present is equal for all and so what is passing away is also equal and what is being lost turns out to be the merest moment, (4) as no one could lose the past or the future. How could anyone lose what he has not got? (5) So always remember these two things. First, that everything is the same in kind from eternity and recurs in circles; and that it makes no difference whether you will see the same things for a hundred years or two thousand or for infinite time. Second,

that both the one who lives longest and the one who is earliest to die lose an equal amount. (6) The present moment is the only thing of which anyone can be deprived, at least if this is the only thing he has and he cannot lose what he has not got.

[15] 'Everything is what you suppose it to be.' This retort to the Cynic Monimus is clear enough; but clear also is the usefulness of the saying, if one accepts the core meaning, as far as it is true.

[16] (1) The human mind does violence to itself most of all whenever it becomes, as far as it can, an outgrowth and a kind of tumour on the universe. (2) To resent anything that happens is to grow apart from nature, which embraces the nature of other things. (3) Again, our mind does so too when it turns away from any human being or moves against him wanting to do him harm, as when people lose their temper. (4) Thirdly, it does violence to itself when it is defeated by pleasure or pain. (5) Fourthly, when it acts a part and does or says anything with pretence or falsehood. (6) Fifthly, when it fails to direct any of its actions or motives towards any goal, but acts in a random and inconsequential way, although even the smallest thing should be done with reference to the end. The end for rational animals is to follow the reason and rule of the most ancient city and constitution.

[17] (1) In a human life, one's time is an instant, one's existence is flux, perception is dim, the composition of the body as a whole is subject to decay, the mind wandering, fortune unpredictable, fame precarious. (2) To sum this up: everything belonging to the body is a river, and everything belonging to the mind is a dream and a delusion; (3) life is a war and a brief stay in a foreign land, and fame after death is oblivion.

(4) What then can guide us on our way? One thing and one thing only—philosophy. This consists in keeping the guardian spirit within us unviolated and unharmed, master of pleasure and pain, doing nothing in a random manner and nothing with falseness or pretence, not needing someone else to do or not to do something. Also, in accepting what happens and what is allotted to one as coming from the source from which one came oneself; and above all, waiting for death with a confident mind, since it is nothing but the dissolution of the elements of which every living creature is composed. (5) If for the elements themselves there is nothing to be feared in their continuous change from one into another, why should we fear the change and dissolution of all of them? It is in accordance with nature, and nothing bad can be in accordance with nature.

Book 3

Written in Carnuntum.

[1] (1) We should not only consider the fact that, day by day, our life is being spent and a smaller amount of it remains, but also consider that if we live longer, it is not clear that our mental powers will remain the same and be adequate for the understanding of affairs and of the theoretical reflection that contributes to our grasp of both divine and human matters. (2) If we begin to lose our mind, such things as respiration, digestion, sense perception, and motivation will not give out. But making proper use of oneself and determining accurately the measure of what is appropriate and specifying the content of sense-impressions, and dealing effectively with this very question, whether now is the time to end one's life, and other questions that need very well-exercised powers of consideration—these are all extinguished at an earlier stage. (3) We must press on, not only because we are drawing closer to death at every moment, but because our grasp of affairs and ability to give them close attention will come to an end before we die.

[2] (1) We should attend closely to points such as that even the by-products of natural processes have a certain charm and attractiveness. (2) For instance, when bread is being baked, the loaf breaks open here and there, and these very cracks, though they show in a sense the failure of the baker's expertise, catch the eye and, in their own special way, stimulate our enthusiasm for the food. (3) Again figs, when they are completely ripe, split open. (4) Also, in olives which are ready to drop, the very proximity to decay adds a certain special beauty to the fruit. (5) Again ears of corn bending towards the earth and the lion's puckered brow, the foam dripping from the boar's mouth, and many other things are far from beautiful if one views them in isolation, but the fact that they are corollaries of natural processes gives them an added beauty and draws us to them. So for someone with feeling and a deeper insight into the workings of the universe, there is almost nothing that will fail to present itself with pleasure, even among the things

that happen as incidental consequences. (6) He will look at the actual gaping jaws of wild beasts with no less pleasure than the representations given by painters and sculptors. He will also be able to see in an old woman or man a certain prime and bloom, and he will look at the erotic charm of his own slave boys with chaste eyes. There are many other such instances that will not strike everyone as being persuasive but only someone who has genuinely familiarized himself with nature and its works.

[3] (1) Hippocrates cured many illnesses and then fell ill and died himself. (2) The Chaldaean astrologers predicted the deaths of many people, and then they too were taken by a fated day. (3) Alexander, Pompey, and Julius Caesar destroyed utterly many cities and slaughtered tens of thousands of cavalrymen and foot-soldiers in pitched battles, and one day they too left this life. (4) Heraclitus, after speculating so much about the universe being destroyed by fire, died with his insides full of water and smeared with a poultice of cow-dung. (5) Democritus was killed by lice, and Socrates by lice of another kind. (6) So what does it amount to: you came on board, you set sail, you have now reached land. Step ashore. If you come to another life, nothing is empty of gods, even there. If you come to unconsciousness, you will no longer be subject to pains and pleasures, and you will no longer be the servant of a vessel as inferior in value as that which serves it is superior. One is mind and the guardian spirit, the other earth and blood.

[4] (1) Do not waste the remaining part of your life in thinking about other people, unless you are doing so with reference to the common benefit. I mean, thinking about what such and such a person is doing and why and what he is saying and thinking and planning and all such things which make you wander from looking after your own ruling centre. (2) So you must exclude from your chain of thought what is random and pointless, and above all anything that is interfering and malicious. (3) You must train yourself only to think the kind of thoughts about which, if someone suddenly asked you, 'what are you thinking now?', you would at once answer frankly, ' "this" or "that" '. So, from your reply it would immediately be clear that all your thoughts are straightforward and kind and express the character of a social being who has no concern with images of pleasure, or self-indulgence in general, or any kind of rivalry, malice or suspicion, or anything else you would blush to admit you were thinking about.

(4) A man like that, who no longer postpones being among the best now, is a sort of priest and servant of the gods. He uses the element seated within

him, which enables the person as a whole to be unstained by pleasures, invulnerable to every pain, untouched by every violent impulse, not forming any thoughts of wrongdoing, a wrestler in the greatest of competitions— that of avoiding being thrown by any passion. He is also dyed to his depths with justice, welcoming with all his heart all that happens and is allotted to him, and only rarely, and only when there is some great need for the public good, does he give his mind to what someone else is saying or doing or thinking. (5) He gives his sole attention to how he might carry out his own activities, and attends continually to his own strand in the whole web; he makes sure that his own activities are done rightly, and he is convinced that his own strand in the web is good. (6) The fate allocated to each of us is carried along with us and carries us along.

(7) He remembers too that all rational creatures are relatives and that, while it is in accordance with human nature to care for all human beings, he should not attend to the opinions of all of them, but only to those who live according to nature. (8) He reminds himself constantly of the character of those who do not live in this way, what they are like at home and away from home, and who they contaminate themselves with by night and by day. (9) Nor does he give weight to the praise of such people who do not even satisfy themselves.

[5] (1) When you carry out actions, do not do so unwillingly or unsociably or unreflectively or with conflicting motives; do not dress up your thoughts with elegant language; do not be a chatterer or a busy-body. (2) Let the god within you be the overseer of a creature who is manly, mature, a statesman, a Roman, and a ruler who has taken up his post, waiting for the signal to quit life and ready to be released, without the need of an oath or someone else as a witness. (3) Maintain an inner joy and one that does not need external support or the peace which others provide. (4) Thus you should be upright, not held upright.

[6] (1) If you can find anything in human life better than justice, truthfulness, self-control, courage—in short, than the self-sufficiency of your mind both in the actions which it enables you to perform according to right reason and the events which are allocated by fate without your choice—if, as I say, you can see anything better than this, turn to it with all your heart and enjoy the supreme good that you have found. (2) If nothing better is revealed than the guardian spirit seated within you, which has subordinated to itself all your motives, and scrutinizes your thoughts and has, as Socrates used to say, withdrawn itself from all sensory passions and has

subordinated itself to the gods and which takes care of other people—(3) if you find all other things to be trivial and valueless in comparison with this, give no room to anything else, since, once you turn towards that and divert from your proper path, you will no longer be able without inner conflict to give the highest honour to that which is properly good. (4) It is not right to set up as a rival to the rational and social good anything alien to its nature, such as the praise of the many, or positions of power, wealth, or enjoyment of pleasures. (5) All of these, even if they seem to suit our nature for a little while, suddenly take control of us and carry us away. (6) But in your case, as I say, simply and freely choose what is better and hold on to that. 'But what is better is what benefits me.' If it benefits you as a rational creature, then maintain this. (7) But if it does so as an animal, reject it and hold to your decision without a big fuss. Only take care that your enquiry is conducted securely.

[7] (1) Never value as beneficial to yourself something which will force you one day to break your word, abandon your sense of shame, hate, suspect, or curse someone else, pretend, or desire something that needs the secrecy of walls or curtains. (2) The one who has chosen to value above all his own mind and guardian-spirit and the worship of his mind's virtue does not make a drama of his life or complain and will not need either isolation or crowds of people; most of all, he will live neither pursuing nor avoiding things. (3) He does not care in any way whether he will have his soul enclosed by his body for a longer or shorter time; (4) even if he needs to leave right away, he goes away as readily as if he were performing any of the other actions that can be done in a decent and orderly way, exercising care for this alone throughout his life, that his mind should never be in a state which is alien to that of a rational and social being.

[8] (1) In the mind of someone who has been disciplined and thoroughly cleansed, you would not find any pus or abscess or festering sore. (2) Nor does fate catch him with his life incomplete, so that you would say the actor is leaving the stage before finishing his part and bringing the play to its end. (3) Further, you will find nothing which is servile or pretentious, nothing that is either dependent on or detached from other people, nothing which needs investigation or lurks out of sight.

[9] (1) Revere your capacity for judgement. Everything depends on this to ensure that there no longer arises in your ruling centre a judgement which fails to follow nature and the constitution of a rational being. (2) It is this

that promises freedom from hasty assent, familiarization with human beings, and a way of life that follows the gods.

[10] (1) Throw everything else aside, and hold on to these few things only and keep in mind that each of us only lives in the present, this brief moment of time; the rest of our life has been lived already or lies in the uncertain future. (2) For each of us, small is our life and small is the corner of earth where it is lived; small too is even the longest fame after death, and this depends on a succession of little human beings who will quickly die and who do not know themselves, let alone the one who has died first.

[11] (1) To the preceding pieces of advice, one more should be added: always make a definition or delineation of whatever presents itself to your mind, so that you can see distinctly what sort of thing it is when stripped down to its essence as a whole and in all its parts, and tell yourself its proper name, and the name of the elements from which it has been put together and into which it will be dissolved. (2) Nothing is so effective in creating greatness of mind as being able to examine methodically and truthfully everything that presents itself in life, and always viewing things in such a way as to consider what kind of function this particular thing contributes to what kind of universe and what value it has for the whole universe and for the human beings who are citizens of the highest city, of which other cities are, as it were, mere households; (3) and what this object is that presently makes an impression on me, and what it is composed of and how long in the nature of things it will persist, and what virtue is needed to respond to it, such as gentleness, courage, truthfulness, good faith, simplicity, self-sufficiency, and so on. (4) So, in each case, you should say: this has come from god, this from the coordination and interweaving of the threads of fate and similar kinds of coincidence and chance, this from one of my own kind, a relative and companion, but one who does not know what is natural for him. (5) But I do know and so I treat him kindly and justly according to the natural law of companionship, though aiming at the same time at what he deserves with regard to the things that are morally neutral.

[12] (1) If you carry out the present action following right reason, with determination, vigour, and good humour, and never allow anything to distract you, but keep your guardian spirit pure and upright, as if you might need to give it back at any time; if you hold fast to this, waiting for nothing and running away from nothing, but are satisfied if your present action is in accordance with nature and if what you say and utter is in accordance with

heroic truth, you will lead a good life. (2) There is no one who can prevent this.

[13] (1) As doctors always keep their instruments and knives at hand to deal with any urgent cases, you should keep your doctrines ready for understanding divine and human affairs and should carry out every action, even the smallest, remembering the bond between the two spheres; (2) you will not succeed in any human action without reference to the divine or vice versa.

[14] No more wanderings. You are not likely to read those notebooks of yours or your accounts of the deeds of the ancient Romans and Greeks, or your extracts from their writings, which you put aside for your old age. Hurry then to your final goal, and, giving up empty hopes, rescue yourself, if you have any concern for yourself, while it is still possible.

[15] They have no idea what is meant by terms such as stealing, sowing, buying, resting, or seeing what needs to be done—this is not done by the eyes but by a different kind of sight.

[16] (1) Body, animation, mind. To the body belong perceptions, to animation impulses, to the mind judgements. Receiving impressions by images is shared with cattle; (2) being drawn this way and that by the puppet-strings of impulse is shared with wild beasts, effeminates, Phalaris, and Nero; having the mind as our guide towards what seems appropriate is shared with those who do not believe in the gods, who betray their country, and who do anything whatever behind closed doors.

(3) If the other things are shared with the classes of people just mentioned, there remains the special characteristic of the good person, namely loving and greeting whatever happens and what his fate spins for him, and not polluting the guardian spirit seated within his breast nor disturbing it with a mass of impressions, but keeping it in a serene state, following god in an orderly way, neither saying anything contrary to the truth or doing anything contrary to justice. (4) If everyone else refuses to believe that he is living a simple, decent, and cheerful life, he is not angry with any of them nor is he diverted from the road that leads to life's final end, which he must reach as one who is pure, at peace, ready to depart, in unforced harmony with his fate.

Book 4

[1] (1) The ruling power within us, when it is in line with nature, takes up a stance towards events that enables it always to adapt easily to what is presented to it. (2) It is not attached to any specific material, but aims at achieving its objectives with reservation. When it comes up against an obstacle, it converts this into material for itself, like fire, when this masters the things that fall into it. A small lamp would have been extinguished by them but a blazing fire quickly appropriates the things thrown into it and consumes them and uses those very things to grow still higher.

[2] No action should be undertaken at random, or otherwise than in line with one of the principles that perfect the art of living.

[3] (1) People look for retreats for themselves, in the country, by the coast, or in the hills; and you too are especially inclined to feel this desire. (2) But this is altogether un-philosophical, when it is possible for you to retreat into yourself at any time you want. There is nowhere that a person can find a more peaceful and trouble-free retreat than in his own mind, especially if he has within himself the kind of thoughts that let him dip into them and so at once gain complete ease of mind; and by ease of mind, I mean nothing but having one's own mind in good order. (3) So constantly give yourself this retreat and renew yourself. You should have to hand concise and fundamental principles, which will be enough, as soon as you encounter them, to cleanse you from all distress and send you back without resentment at the activities to which you return.

(4) What is it that you resent? Human wickedness? Reflect on the principle that all rational animals are born for each other's sake, that tolerance is a part of justice, and that people do wrong unwillingly, and think how many people up until now have spent their lives in enmity, suspicion, hatred, and direct conflict, only to be laid out in death and reduced to ashes—and stop resenting this. (5) Or do you resent what is allocated

to you from the whole? Then, call to mind the disjunction, 'Either providence or atoms', and the arguments proving that the universe is a kind of city. (6) Or will bodily things affect you? Reconsider that when the mind takes hold of itself and recognizes its own power, it no longer associates itself with the movements, rough or smooth of the breath; and finally think of what you have heard and assented to as regards pain and pleasure. (7) Or will the trivial desire for fame distract you? Hold in view how quickly everything is forgotten and the abyss of infinite time in the past and the future, and the emptiness of applause, and the fickleness and lack of judgement of those who seem to praise you, and the narrowness of the scope in which this fame is confined. (8) The whole earth is a mere point, and how very small a part of it is this corner in which we have our home, and here how many and what sort of people will sing your praises?

(9) Finally, then, remember to retreat into this little garden of yourself, and above all do not agonize or strain yourself, but maintain your freedom and look at things as a man, a human being, a citizen, a mortal creature. (10) Among the most readily available of the precepts into which you must dip, two should be included. First, that things in themselves do not affect the mind, but stand motionless outside it, and that all disturbances derive solely from inner judgement. (11) Second, that all these things that you look at it will change in no time at all and then cease to exist. And continually reflect on how many changes you have yourself experienced. (12) The universe is change and life is judgement.

[4] (1) If intelligence is common to us, reason too is common to us, which makes us rational beings. If so, the reason that tells us what to do or not is also common to us. If so, the law too is common; if so, we are fellow citizens. If so, we share in a kind of constitution; if so, the universe is a kind of city; (2) in what other common constitution will anyone say that the whole human race shares? It is from here, from this common city that we derive intelligence itself and rationality and law—or from where else? (3) Just as the earthy part of me has been derived from earth of some kind, and the watery part from another element, and the breathy part from some source, and the hot and fiery part from yet another specific source—since nothing comes from nothing, just as nothing returns to nothing—so our intelligence too comes from somewhere.

[5] Death, like birth, is a mystery of nature; one is the combination and the other the dissolution, in turn, of the same elements. Taken generally, this is

nothing to be ashamed of; it is contrary neither to what suits an intelligent creature nor to the principle of his constitution.

[6] Given the character of these people, it is natural that these things should necessarily follow, and anyone who does not want this to be the case does not want the fig-tree to produce its bitter sap. In any case, keep this in mind that in a very short time, both you and he will be dead, and soon after that not even your names will remain.

[7] Get rid of the judgement, and you have got rid of the idea, 'I have been harmed'; get rid of the idea, 'I have been harmed', and you have got rid of the harm itself.

[8] What does not make a person worse in himself does not make his life worse either; it neither harms him outside nor inside.

[9] It was necessary that the nature of the beneficial should make this happen.

[10] (1) 'All that happens happens justly.' If you look closely, you will find it true. By this, I do not mean simply in line with the sequence of cause and effect, but also in line with justice, and as if things were assigned by someone according to merit. (2) So continue to look closely, as you have started, and whatever you do, combine it with being a good person, in the specific sense you have grasped of what it means to be a good person. (3) Hold on to this in everything you do.

[11] Do not view things to be such as the one who does you wrong judges them or wants you to judge them, but see them as they really are.

[12] (1) You should always be ready to apply these two principles. The first is only to do those things which the reason inherent in the kingly and law-making art proposes for the benefit of humanity. The second is to change your mind if someone appears and puts you right and redirects you away from some opinion. (2) But this redirection must always be based on a credible view about what is just or for the common benefit; and your preference should be based on similar grounds and not because it looks pleasant or popular.

[13] 'Do you possess reason?' 'Yes, I do.' 'Why not use it then? If this does its job, what else do you want?'

[14] You exist as a part. You will vanish again into that which gave you birth; or rather you will be received back into its generative reason by a process of change.

[15] Many grains of incense thrown on the same altar; one falls first, another later, but it makes no difference.

[16] Within ten days, you will seem to be a god to the same people who now see you as a wild beast or an ape, if you revert to your principles and the worship of reason.

[17] Do not act as if you were going to live for a thousand years. The inescapable is hanging over your head; while you are alive, while it is still possible, become a good person.

[18] What ease of mind a person gains when he keeps his eye not on what his neighbour has said or done or thought but only on what he himself does, to ensure that it is just or holy or matches what a good person does. Do not look around at the black character of others but run straight on to the finishing line, not turning this way or that.

[19] (1) The person who is all in a flutter about his posthumous fame fails to recognize that each of those who remember him will very soon be dead; then again, the one who takes over from him, until all memory is extinguished as it passes along a line of people who are lit and then blown out. (2) Even if you adopt the hypothesis that those who will remember are immortal and the memory is immortal—what is that to you? I do not mean just that this is nothing to the dead, but what is praise to the living, except to achieve some practical purpose? (3) As things are, you are rejecting inappropriately the gift of nature, and holding on to what someone else says.

[20] (1) Besides, everything that is in any way beautiful is beautiful in itself and complete in itself, and praise forms no part of it; at any rate, nothing becomes worse or better by being praised. (2) This applies even to what is popularly called beautiful, such as material objects or works of art; and as for what is really beautiful, does this need anything beyond itself? Surely not, any more than law or truth or kindness or self-respect. (3) Which of these is beautiful because it is praised or damaged by being criticized? Does an emerald become any worse if it is not praised; and what about gold, ivory, purple, a lyre, a sword, a blossom, or a bush?

[21] (1) If souls continue to exist, how does the air have room for them from eternity? (2) You could equally well ask how the earth has room for the bodies of those buried over the same vast stretch of time. Just as on earth the change and decomposition of these bodies makes room for other corpses, so it is with souls. They transform their existence into the air, remain there for a certain length of time, and then change, dissolve, and are burnt up as they are received back into the generative principle of the whole. In this way, they provide room for those settling there next. This is what you might reply, on the supposition that souls continue to exist. (3) But we should consider not only the many bodies that are buried in this way, but also those of the animals eaten every day by us and other animals. (4) How large a number are consumed and thus in a sense buried in the bodies of those who feed on them? Still, there is room to hold them because they are turned into blood or transformed into air or fire. (5) How in this case can we investigate the truth? By drawing a distinction between the material and the causal.

[22] Do not wander in your mind, but in every motive, provide the right response and with every impression maintain your capacity for good judgement.

[23] (1) Everything is harmonious for me that is harmonious with you, o universe, nothing is too early or too late which suits your time. (2) Everything is fruit to me that your seasons bring, o nature; everything comes from you, everything inheres in you, everything returns to you. (3) The poet says, 'O dear city of Cecrops'; will you not say, 'O dear city of Zeus'?

[24] (1) 'Do a small number of things', he says, 'if you want contentment.' Would it not be better to do what is necessary and what the reason of a naturally political animal requires and as it requires? (2) This brings not only the contentment that comes from acting rightly but also that which comes from doing a small number of things. (3) Most of what we say and do is not necessary, and if you get rid of that, you will have more leisure and be less disturbed. (4) So you should remind yourself on each occasion: surely, this is *not* one of the things that are necessary. (5) And you should not only get rid of unnecessary actions but also impressions; in that way, redundant actions will not follow.

[25] Try out how the life of a good person suits you—someone who is pleased with what is allocated from the whole, and satisfied with his own just action and kind disposition.

[26] (1) You have seen those things; now look at these: (2) do not disturb yourself, make yourself simple. (3) Someone is doing wrong? He is wronging himself. (4) Something has happened to you? Fine. Everything that happens has been fated and the thread has been spun for you from the whole from the beginning. (5)To sum it up: life is short; you should take your profit from the present, with sound reasoning and justice. (6) Keep sober but relaxed.

[27] (1) Either an ordered universe or a heterogeneous mass heaped together that forms no proper order. (2) Or can it be that a certain order subsists in you, but disorder in the whole, and that too when all things are both distinct and thoroughly blended and thus linked by a shared sympathy.

[28] A black character, an effeminate character, a stubborn character, bestial, brutish, infantile, fatuous, deceitful, coarse, mercenary, tyrannical.

[29] (1) If someone who does not understand the contents of the universe is a stranger in the universe, he who does not understand its events is also a stranger. (2) He who runs away from political reason is a fugitive. He who shuts the eye of the mind is blind. He who depends on someone else and does not have in himself what is needed for life is a beggar. (3) He who cuts himself off and separates himself from the reason of our shared nature by his dissatisfaction from what happens is an abscess on the universe; the nature which brought you into being also brings this about; he is a limb wrenched from the city who has wrenched his mind from that of rational beings, though that forms a unity.

[30] This person philosophizes with no tunic, and that one without a book. Another, half-naked, says, 'I have no bread but I stay true to reason.' But I have nourishment from my studies and yet fail to stay true to it.

[31] Love the expertise which you have learned and take support from this. Pass through the remainder of your life, as one who has entrusted all he has, in a full-hearted way, to the gods, setting yourself up neither as a tyrant nor a slave to any human being.

[32] (1) Call to mind, for example, the time of Vespasian, you will see everything the same: people marrying, bringing up children, falling ill, dying, fighting wars, feasting, trading, farming, flattering, asserting themselves, suspecting, plotting, praying for someone else's death, grumbling at their

present situation, loving, piling up wealth, longing for consulships or king-ships; and now that life of theirs is utterly vanished. (2) Pass on to the time of Trajan; you will see everything the same; that life too is dead. (3) In the same way, look at the records of other ages and indeed whole nations and see how many people after their exertions soon fell and were dissolved into the elements. (4) Above all, you must hold in your mind those whom you yourself have known who, distracted by empty projects, neglected to act in line with their own constitution, and to hold fast and be satisfied with that. (5) So you must remember that the attention given to each activity has its own proper worth and proportion; then you will not lose heart and give up, provided you are not engaged with smaller matters to a greater extent than is appropriate.

[33] (1) Terms in common use in past time are now archaisms; so too the names of those famous in past time are now in a sense archaisms: Camillus, Caeso, Volesus, Dentatus; and a little later Scipio and Cato, and then Augustus, and then Hadrian and Antoninus. All things pass and quickly become material for stories, and then oblivion covers them completely. (2) And here I am speaking of those who shone out with wonderful bright-ness; as for the rest, as soon as they breathe out their last, they are 'unseen and unheard'. But in any case what is eternal memory—complete empti-ness. (3) What is there then, to which we should devote our energies? One thing alone—a just mind and actions done for the common good, speech incapable of lying, and a disposition that greets everything that happens as necessary, as familiar, and as flowing from a source and spring which has the same character.

[34] Willingly give yourself up to Clotho, letting her spin the thread of your fate in whatever events she wants.

[35] Everything is transitory, both that which remembers and that which is remembered.

[36] (1) Constantly observe everything coming into being by change and train yourself to realize that the nature of the whole loves nothing so much as to change the things that exist and create new things that are like them. (2) Everything that exists is in a sense the seed of what will come into existence from it, (3) whereas you imagine that the only seeds are those thrown into the earth or the womb—a very un-philosophical way of thinking about this.

[37] You will soon be dead and are not yet unified or undisturbed or free from the suspicion that you may be harmed from outside or gracious towards everyone, and do not yet realize that wisdom inheres solely in acting justly.

[38] Look into their ruling centres and see what they avoid and what they pursue.

[39] (1) What is bad for you does not depend on someone else's ruling centre, or indeed in any change or alteration of your environment. (2) Where then does it lie? In that part of you that forms judgements about what is bad. If it does not form this judgement, then all things are well. (3) Even if what is nearest to it, your poor body, is subject to surgery or cautery, or left to suppurate or mortify, still the part of you that forms judgements about these things should keep calm. That is, it should judge that nothing is bad or good which can happen equally to a bad man and a good. (4) What happens equally to someone whose life is out of line with nature and to someone whose life is in line with it cannot itself be in line with nature or out of line with it.

[40] Constantly think of the universe as one living animal, possessing one substance and one soul; and how all things are absorbed into the single perception of this animal and how it does all things with a single motive and how all things are co-responsible for everything that happens and how things form a kind of web and mesh.

[41] You are a little soul carrying around a corpse, as Epictetus used to say.

[42] There is nothing bad for things in experiencing change, just as there is nothing good for them in emerging out of change.

[43] There is a kind of river in events and time is a violent stream; as soon as each thing is seen, it has been carried away and something else is being carried past and that will be carried away.

[44] All that happens is as habitual and familiar as the rose in spring and fruit in the summer; of the same kind are illness and death and slander and intrigue and whatever pleases or pains those who are foolish.

[45] What follows is always linked by affinity with what went before; it is not like the enumeration of separate units linked only by a necessary

sequence but a rational combination; and just as existing things are harmo-
niously co-ordinated, so things that come into existence do not exhibit bare
succession but a kind of wonderful affinity.

[46] (1) Always remember the saying of Heraclitus: 'the death of earth is the
birth of water and the death of water is the birth of air, the death of air is the
birth of fire, and vice versa'. (2) Remember too his saying about the person
'who forgets the road he is taking'; (3) and 'they are most at odds with that
with which they associate constantly, the reason that governs the whole,
and the things they meet each day seem alien to them', and that, 'we should
not act like people asleep, (4) since then too we seem to act and speak', (5)
and that, 'we should not be like children with their parents', that is, simply
accepting things as we have been told them.

[47] If one of the gods told you that tomorrow you would be dead or at all
events the day after tomorrow, you would no longer consider that it
mattered whether it was the day after tomorrow rather than tomorrow,
unless you were extremely small-minded (what is the difference between
them?). In the same way, do not regard it as very important whether you
live for many years rather than tomorrow.

[48] (1) Reflect constantly how many doctors have died, after often knitting
their brows over those who were ill; and how many astrologers, after
predicting the deaths of other people, as if death were some great thing;
and how many philosophers, after countless debates about death or immor-
tality; and how many heroes, after killing many other people, and how
many tyrants, after exercising the power of life and death with terrible
arrogance, as though they were immortal themselves; and how many entire
cities died, if one can put it in this way, Helike and Pompeii and
Herculaneum, and others without number. (2) Run over the ones you know,
one after the other: one person attended another's funeral and then was laid
out himself, another followed him, and all in so short a time. (3) Taking it
all together, keep always in view that human life is transitory and cheap:
yesterday a drop of semen, tomorrow a buried corpse or ashes. (4) So make
your way through this brief moment of time in line with nature and let go of
your life gladly, as an olive might fall when ripe, blessing the earth that bore
it and grateful to the tree that gave it growth.

[49] (1) Be like the headland, on which the waves break constantly, which
still stands firm, while the foaming waters are put to rest around it. (2) 'It is

my bad luck that this has happened to me.' On the contrary, say, 'It is my good luck that, although this has happened to me, I can bear it without getting upset, neither crushed by the present nor afraid of the future.' (3) This kind of event could have happened to anyone, but not everyone would have borne it without getting upset. Why is that case one of bad luck rather than this case one of good? (4) In general, do you describe as bad luck for a person what is not a failure in human nature? And do you think anything can be a failure in human nature which is not out of line with the intention of that nature? (5) Well then, you have learnt what that intention is. Surely, what has happened cannot prevent you from being just, high-minded, self-controlled, thoughtful, deliberate, truthful, self-respecting, free, and the other qualities whose presence enables human nature to maintain its character. (6) So in future in every event that might lead you to get upset, remember to adopt this principle: this is not bad luck, but bearing it nobly is good luck.

[50] (1) An un-philosophical, but still effective, aid for despising death is to review in your mind those who have clung tenaciously to life. (2) What did they gain more than those who died prematurely? (3) In any case, they are lying at last in their graves: Caedicanus, Fabius, Julianus, Lepidus, and any others like them, who carried many people to the grave and were then carried themselves. Taken overall, the interval is a small one, and in what experiences and with what people and with what a poor body is this interval dragged out. (4) So do not regard it as important. (5) See the gulf of time behind and another infinite time ahead. (6) What difference is there in this respect between an infant who lives three days and someone who lives three times as long as Nestor?

[51] Always run the short road; and the short road is the one in line with nature; so say and do everything in the soundest way. A purpose like that frees us from all troubles and hesitation, every kind of management of resources and ostentation.

Book 5

[1] (1) Early in the morning, when you are finding it hard to wake up, hold this thought in your mind: 'I am getting up to do the work of a human being. Do I still resent it, if I am going out to do what I was born for and for which I was brought into the world? Or was I framed for this, to lie under the bedclothes and keep myself warm?' (2) 'But this is more pleasant.' So were you born for pleasure; in general, were you born for feeling or for action? Don't you see the plants, the little sparrows, the ants, the spiders, the bees doing their own work, and playing their part in making up an ordered world. (3) And then are you unwilling to do the work of a human being? Won't you run to do what is in line with your nature? (4) 'But one must rest too.' One must, I agree. But nature has set limits on that, just as it has on eating and drinking, and yet are you going beyond what is enough? But when it comes to your actions, that is no longer the case, but there you stop short of what you could do. (5) The reason is that you do not love yourself. If you did, you would love your nature and its intention. (6) Other people who love their own types of expertise wear themselves out with their work on them without taking time to wash or eat. But do you value your own nature less than the smith his metalwork, the dancer his dancing, the miser his money, and the celebrity his moment of glory? (7) But when these are passionately engaged, they are willing to give up food and sleep rather than fail to promote the things towards which they are drawn; but in your case, do actions for the common good seem less valuable and worth less effort?

[2] How easy it is to reject and wipe away every disturbing or alien impression and then be at once in complete calm.

[3] (1) Judge yourself worthy of every word and action that is in line with nature, and do not let yourself be talked out of this by any subsequent criticism or talk, but if anything has been done or said rightly, do not consider yourself to deserve any less. (2) Those others have their own

ruling centres and follow their own motives. Don't turn round to look at that, but continue straight on, following your own and the common nature, since both of these follow a single path.

[4] I travel along nature's way until I fall down and take my rest, breathing out my last into the air, from which I draw my daily breath, and falling down to that earth from which my father drew his seed, my mother her blood and my nurse her milk, and from which for so many years I have taken my daily food and drink, the earth which carries my footsteps and which I have used to the full in so many ways.

[5] (1) They cannot admire you for your mental acuity; so be it, but there are other qualities of which you cannot say: 'I have no gift for that.' (2) Offer, then, what is wholly up to you: sincerity, dignity, hard work, indifference to pleasure, acceptance of one's fate, frugality, kindness, freedom, restraint, discretion, elevation of mind. (3) Do you not see how much you can offer for which there is no excuse in lack of natural talent or unsuitability, and yet you still remain at a lower level of your own free will. (4) Or are you compelled to grumble, to be stingy, to flatter, and blame your poor body, to be ingratiating, to boast, to be so restless in your mind because you were created without any natural talents? (5) No—by the gods—you could have been released from all this long ago, and convicted of only one charge, if indeed that, of being rather slow and weak of understanding. And even in that respect, you should train yourself, and not disregard or relish your own dullness.

[6] (1) One kind of person, whenever he does someone else a good turn, is quick in calculating the favour done to him. (2) Another is not so quick to do this; but in himself he thinks about the other person as owing him something and is conscious of what he has done. (3) A third is in a sense not even conscious of what he has done, but is like a vine which has produced grapes and looks for nothing more once it has produced its own fruit, like a horse which has run a race, a dog which has followed the scent, or a bee which has made its honey.

(4) A person who has done something good does not make a big fuss about it, but goes on to the next action, as a vine goes on to produce grapes again in season. (5) So you should be one of those who do this without in a sense being aware of doing so. (6) 'Yes; but surely we should be aware of this', someone may say, 'since it is characteristic of a social being to perceive that he is acting sociably, and—by Zeus—to want his neighbour to perceive

it too!' (7) What you say is true; but you are misinterpreting the present point, and because of that you will be one of the people I mentioned before; they too are misled by a certain kind of plausible reasoning. (8) But if you want to engage with the real meaning of my point, don't be afraid that because of that you will neglect any socially beneficial act.

[7] A prayer of the Athenians: 'Rain, rain, dear Zeus, on the plough-lands and the plains of the Athenians.' We should pray in this direct and free style or not at all.

[8] (1) Just as people say, 'Asclepius prescribed for someone horse-riding or cold baths or walking barefoot', so we could say this: 'The nature of the whole has prescribed for him sickness or disability or loss or something else of that kind.' (2) In the first case, 'prescribed' means something like 'ordered this for him as appropriate for his health', (2) and in the second too what happens to each person has been ordered as being in some sense appropriate for his destiny. (3) When we say that these happenings 'fit' us, we are talking like builders when they say that squared blocks 'fit' in walls or pyramids, because they join up with each other in a particular structured arrangement. (4) In general, there is one harmony; and just as all bodies combine to make up one body, the universe, so all causes combine to make up the one cause that is fate. (5) Even completely un-philosophical people understand what I mean; they say, 'that was sent to him'; (6) what was sent to him was also prescribed for him. (7) So we should accept these things just as we accept what Asclepius prescribes. (8) Many of these too are harsh, but we welcome them, in the hope of health.

(9) You should regard the realization and fulfilment of what seems good to nature as a whole in the same way as you view your own health, (10) and so welcome everything that happens, even if it seems rather cruel, because it leads in that direction, towards the health of the universe and the well-being and success of Zeus. (11) He would not have sent this to anyone, if it did not benefit the whole, any more than any nature you can mention sends anything which is not appropriate for what is governed by that nature.

(12) So there are two reasons why you should accept what happens to you: one is that it occurred to you, and was prescribed for you, and stands in a special relation to you, as a thread of destiny spun from the first from the most ancient of causes. Another is that what comes to each of us individually is a cause of the well-being and perfection and, by Zeus, the very continuation of that which governs the whole. (13) Just as the completeness of the whole is mutilated, if you cut off even a fraction of the connection

and the continuity of its parts, so too for its causes. And you do cut it off, as far as you can, when you are discontented and in a certain sense you destroy it.

[9] (1) Don't be disgusted, or give up, or be impatient if acting according to right principles in all you do is not completely consolidated. After a fall, come back again and be glad if most of your actions are more worthy of a human being. Love what you go back to; and do not go back to philosophy like a schoolboy to his teacher, but as someone with sore eyes turns to the sponge and eye-cup, another to the bandages or lotion. (2) In that way, you won't make a show of obeying reason but will find it a source of relief. (3) Remember too that philosophy wants only what your nature wants, whereas you wanted something else, not in line with nature. (4) What could be more attractive than this? Does not pleasure trip us up by its attractiveness? But see if it is more attractive than generosity of spirit, freedom, simplicity, kindness, holiness. What is more attractive than wisdom itself—when you consider how secure and how smoothly flowing in all situations is understanding and knowledge.

[10] (1) Things are so veiled, in a sense, that a number of philosophers, and not insignificant ones, have thought they could not be grasped with certainty at all, while even the Stoics themselves think they are hard to grasp with certainty. (2) And every assent we give is subject to change: where is a person to be found who is not subject to change? (3) Pass on now to the objects of sensation themselves: how short-lived they are and cheap and capable of falling into the possession of a rent-boy, prostitute, or thief! (4) Go on next to the characters of your associates; it is difficult to put up even with the most agreeable of them, not to mention that one can scarcely bear oneself. (5) In such a filth and fog and so great a flux of being and time and movement and moving things, I cannot discern what object can be valued highly or taken seriously in its entirety. (6) On the contrary, one should encourage oneself to wait for natural release and not be aggravated by the delay, but find comfort in these things alone: one is that nothing will happen to me which is not in line with the nature of the whole; the other is that it is within my power never to do anything out of line with my god and guardian-spirit. (7) No one can force me to act against this.

[11] To what use am I now employing my soul? On each occasion ask your-self and examine this question: 'What do I have in this part of me which people call the ruling centre, and whose mind do I have now—that of a

child, an adolescent, a mere woman, a tyrant, a domestic animal, a wild beast?'

[12] (1) You can form an idea of what things seem good to the mass of people in this way. (2) If someone were to think of the things that were really good, for instance, wisdom, self-control, justice, courage, he would not be able, while holding these in his mind, to listen to the verses about the man 'who is so well-provided with good things'—they would not fit. But if, on the other hand, he holds in his mind what the mass of people think are good, he will listen and readily accept what the comic poet says as an appropriate comment. (3) So we can see that even the mass of people form a picture of the difference; otherwise, this comment would not cause offence and be rejected in the one case, while, when it is applied to wealth and the blessings associated with luxury or fame, we accept it as a fitting and witty comment. (4) Go on and ask whether we should value and regard as good those things about which, when we have formed them in our minds, we should appropriately say of the owner that, because he is so well-provided with them, 'he has no room left to shit'.

[13] (1) I am composed of the causal and material; and neither of these will disappear into nothingness, just as neither arose from nothingness. (2) Thus, every part of me will be assigned by change to some part of the universe, and that will change again into another part of the universe, and so on to infinity. (3) It was through this kind of change that I came into existence, and my parents too and so on going backwards to another infinity. (4) Nothing prevents me from using this kind of language, even if the universe is organised so as to have a series of finite periods.

[14] (1) Reason and rational expertise are capacities which are sufficient for themselves and their activities. (2) Thus, they activate themselves from their own specific starting point and make their way to the goal set for them, and that is why such actions are called 'correct acts', because they are signalling the correct path.

[15] (1) A human being should give his attention to none of those things which do not fit his nature as a human being. (2) They are not required of a human being, nor does human nature promise them, nor do they form the completion of human nature. (3) Therefore the goal set for human beings does not inhere in them nor does the good which constitutes the goal. (4) Further, if any of these things did fit his nature as a human being, it would

not be fitting to despise them or to hold out against them, nor would the person who ensures that he has no need of them deserve our praise, nor would the person who fails to take his fair share of them be good, if these were good. (5) But as it is, the more someone deprives himself of these or things like them or puts up with being deprived of them, the better he is as a person.

[16] (1) As your most frequent impressions are, so will your mind be: your character is coloured by its impressions. (2) Colour it then with a succession of impressions such as these: where it is possible to live, it is also possible to live well; but it is possible to live in a court so it is possible to live well in a court. (3) Or again: for the purpose for which each animal is constituted, towards that he is drawn; and what he is drawn towards, there his goal inheres; and wherever his goal is, there also for each thing is it benefit and good; and therefore the good for a rational creature is community. (4) It has long since been proved that we were born for community. (5) Or was it not clear that the worse exists for the sake of the better, and the better for each other? Animate creatures are better than inanimate, and rational creatures better than those which are merely animate.

[17] To pursue the impossible is madness; but it is impossible for bad people not to do such things.

[18] (1) Nothing happens to anyone, which he is not naturally equipped to bear. (2) The same things happen to someone else, and either because he fails to realize what has happened or because he shows strength of mind he stands firm and remains unaffected. (3) It is strange that ignorance and submission are stronger than wisdom.

[19] Things as such do not affect the mind at all nor do they have access to the mind, nor can they alter or move the mind. The only thing which turns and moves the mind is itself, and it ensures that the things presented to it match the judgements which it regards as worthy for it to make about them.

[20] (1) In one respect, human beings are closest to us, in that we must do good to them and put up with them. But in that any of them stand in the way of our own proper actions, human beings become one of the things that are matters of indifference to me, no less than sun or wind or wild beast. (2) They may obstruct one or other of my actions but they do not act as obstacles to my motivation or disposition because I have the power of

reservation and adaptation. (3) The mind adapts and converts everything that prevents its activity into something that serves its objective; an impediment to its action becomes a means of help to this action and a blockage along the way becomes a means to help it on its way.

[21] (1) Respect the highest power in the universe; this is what uses everything and directs everything. (2) In the same way, respect the highest power in yourself, which is what is the same in kind as the other power; (3) in yourself too this is what uses the other things, and your life is directed by it.

[22] What is not harmful to the city does not harm the citizens either. In the case of every impression that you have been harmed apply this rule; if the city is not harmed, I am not harmed either. But if the city is harmed, one should not be angry at the person who harms the city, but point out to him what he has overlooked.

[23] (1) Reflect often on the speed with which all that exists and is coming to be is swept past us and moves away. (2) Existence is like a river in constant flow, and its activities are in continual change and its causes innumerable in their variety, and hardly anything stands still, even what is near to us; and there is the yawning infinity of the past and the future into which everything vanishes. (3) How then is he not a fool who in all this is puffed up with pride or agonized or aggravated as though anything would trouble us for any period of time and for long.

[24] Call to mind the whole of existence, of which you share the smallest part, and the whole of time, of which is granted to you only a brief and hairsbreadth interval, and fate—how small a part of that you are.

[25] (1) Does someone wrong me? He will see to that. He has his own disposition, his own action. (2) I have now what universal nature wants me to have, and I do what my nature wants me to do now.

[26] (1) Make sure that the ruling and sovereign part of your soul is unaffected by the movement, rough or smooth, in the flesh and that it does not combine with that, but circumscribes itself and restricts those experiences to the parts affected. (2) Whenever they communicate themselves to the mind by virtue of that other sympathy, as is bound to happen in a unified body, then you should not attempt to resist the sensation which is a natural

one; but your ruling centre should not add its own further judgement, that it is good or bad.

[27] (1) Live with the gods. The person living with the gods is the one who constantly shows them his mind content with what is assigned to it, and doing what the guardian spirit wants, which Zeus has given to each person, as a fragment of himself, as his overseer and guide. (2) This is each person's mind and reason.

[28] (1) Surely you aren't angry with someone who smells of stale sweat? Surely you aren't angry with someone with stale breath? What good will that do? That's the kind of mouth he has; that's the kind of armpit he has; and there is a necessary connection between the smells and those factors. (2) 'But this person possesses rationality, and if he gives it thought he can work out why he is offensive.' (3) Well done! So you have rationality too. Activate one rational disposition by another: show him, tell him. If he listens, you will cure him and there will be no need for anger. (4) Neither a play-actor nor a prostitute.

[29] (1) You can live your life here and now in the way you intend to live once you have left life. But if they do not allow this, then leave life, but do not do so as if you were suffering some harm. The fire smokes, and I leave the room. Why consider that very important? (2) But as long as nothing like that drives me out, I stay here free, and no one prevents me from doing what I wish. My wish is to act in line with the nature of a rational and sociable creature.

[30] (1) The mind of the whole is sociable. At least, it has made the inferior for the sake of the superior, and has harmonized the superior to each other. (2) You can see how it has subordinated, co-ordinated, and given each its proper place and brought the best groups into harmony with each other.

[31] (1) How have you behaved till now towards gods, parents, brothers, wife, children, teachers, tutors, friends, relations, servants, servants? Consider whether your attitude so far has been this: 'do no evil, speak no evil'. (2) Remind yourself what you have been through and what you had the strength to endure, (3) and that the story of your life is already full, and your service completed, and how many fine actions you have observed and how many pleasures and pains you have ignored, and how many ambitions you have disregarded, and what unkind people you have been kind to.

[32] (1) Why do unskilled and ignorant minds baffle someone who has expertise and knowledge? Well, what is the mind which has expertise and knowledge? (2) It is the one which knows the beginning and end and the reason that goes through the whole of existence and that through all eternity governs the whole through fixed cycles.

[33] (1) In no time at all ashes or a skeleton, and either just a name or no name at all and a name is just sound and echo. (2) What is highly prized in life is empty, rotten, and trivial, puppies snapping at each, children squabbling, laughing, and then soon crying. (3) And trust, respect, justice, and truth flee 'Olympus from the broad-pathed earth'. (4) What then still keeps me here if the objects of sensation are always changing and unstable, and our senses are dim and easily deceived by false impressions, and our poor little soul itself is a fine spray of blood. Surely a good reputation in such circumstances is empty. (5) What then? Won't you wait with a good grace either for extinction or a change of condition? (6) And until that moment comes, what is enough? What else but to worship the gods and do good to human beings, and to show tolerance and restraint. As for what lies inside the limits of mere flesh and breath, remember that this is neither yours nor up to you.

[34] (1) You can always have a smooth flow in your life at least if you can follow the right path and hold to this path in your thoughts and actions. (2) Two things are common to the mind of god and humanity and so of every rational creature; not to be hindered by anyone else and to find one's good in a just disposition and action and to make this the limit of one's desire.

[35] If this is neither my wrongdoing nor an action resulting from my wrongdoing nor is harm done to the common good, why am I troubled because of it? And what harm is there to the common good?

[36] (1) Don't let yourself be completely carried away by impressions, but help people as much as you can and as they deserve even if their loss relates to things without inherent value. Still, do not form the impression that this constitutes harm; that is a bad habit. (2) Like the old man who went off asking for his foster-child's top, while remembering that it was just a top, so you should act on the stage. (3) Have you forgotten, man, what these things are. 'Yes, but they mattered a lot to these people.' Is that a reason for you to be foolish too then?

[37] There was a time when I was a lucky person in every context and occasion. Being lucky means giving yourself good fortune; and good fortune means having good dispositions of character, and good motives, and doing good actions.

Book 6

[1] (1) The substance of the whole is compliant and adaptable and the reason directing this has no cause in itself to do wrong, since it contains no wrong-doing; it neither does wrong nor is anything injured by it. (2) Everything comes into being and is carried out in line with it.

[2] (1) If you are acting appropriately, it should be a matter of indifference to you whether you are cold or hot or whether you are over-tired or have had enough sleep, and whether people speak well or badly about you, and whether you are dying or doing something else. (2) Even this—the act of dying—is one of the actions of our life; here too it is enough to make good use of what the moment presents.

[3] Look within: do not let the specific quality or value or any object pass you by.

[4] Everything that exists will quickly change and either it will evaporate, if all existence forms a unified whole, or it will be dispersed.

[5] The directing reason knows its own disposition, and what it does, and on what material.

[6] The best kind of revenge is not to become like them.

[7] Find joy and rest in one thing: passing from one sociable act to another sociable act while keeping god in your thoughts.

[8] The ruling centre is that which activates itself, adapts itself, makes itself what it wants to be, and makes everything that happens appear to itself as it wants.

[9] All things are carried out in accordance with the nature of the whole; at any rate, they could not be carried out in accordance with any other nature, whether embracing the universe from outside or enclosed inside or attached outside.

[10] (1) Either a hotpotch, entanglement, and dispersal, or unity, order, and providence. (2) In the former case, why do I wish to spend time in such a random assemblage and chaos? (3) Why should I care about anything other than how one day I shall 'return to earth'? (4) But why should that disturb me? Dispersal will happen to me whatever I do. (5) But in the latter case, I revere the directing power, stand firm, and have confidence in it.

[11] When circumstances force you into being, as it were, disturbed, quickly return to yourself, and do not step out of your rhythm for longer than is necessary; you will master the harmony more by returning to it constantly.

[12] (1) If you had a step-mother and a mother at the same time, you would give proper attention to the former and yet you would be constantly returning to your mother. (2) You have the same relationship to the court and philosophy. So return often to philosophy and find rest in it; it is because of this that life at court seems bearable to you and you are bearable to your court.

[13] (1) How good it is when you have roast meat and such delicacies in front of you to form the impression that this is the corpse of a fish, and that this is the corpse of a bird or pig; and again that the Falernian wine is grape juice, and the purple robe is lamb's wool dipped in shell-fish blood; and, as for sexual intercourse, that it is the friction of an entrail and the expulsion of mucus accompanied by a kind of spasm. (2) How good are these impressions at getting to the heart of things in themselves and penetrating them so you can see what they really are. (3) You should do this through the whole of your life and whenever things seem most worthy of your trust, show them naked, and see how cheap they are, and strip away the story that they use to amplify their importance. (4) Pride is clever at cheating by false reasoning, and it is when you are most convinced that you are engaged in worthwhile matters that you are most deceived. Consider, at any rate, what Crates says about Xenocrates himself.

[14] (1) Most of the things which ordinary people admire can be referred to the broadest category, things that are held together by physical cohesion or

by natural growth, such as minerals and timber, or figs, vines, and olives. Those that are admired by people of more medium level can be referred to things which are held together by vitality such as flocks and herds. Those that are admired by yet more refined people can be referred to things held together by mind that is rational, though not in so far as it is rational but rather in so far as it constitutes expertise or some technical skill or the bare ownership of masses of slaves. (2) But someone who values the mind in so far as it is rational and political no longer turns his attention to those other things, but above all keeps his mind in a rational and sociable state and activity and cooperates with those of the same kind to this end.

[15] (1) Some things are hurrying into being, others are hurrying to be no more, and part of what is coming into being is already extinguished. Flows and changes constantly renew the universe, as the unceasing movement of time makes boundless eternity for ever young. (2) In this river, where it is impossible to stand, which of these things that are rushing past him could anyone place value on? It is just as if you started to be attracted to one of the little sparrows that fly past, when already it has gone from one's sight. (3) Indeed, the very life of each of us is just the same as the evaporation of our blood or a breath taken in from the atmosphere. (4) There is no difference between taking a single breath of air and giving it back, which we do every moment, and giving back the whole capacity for respiration, which you acquired only yesterday or the day before, to the source from which you first drew it.

[16] (1) There is nothing valuable in transpiring like plants, or breathing like cattle and wild beasts or receiving the imprint of sense impressions or being pulled around like puppets in our motives or gathering together in herds or feeding ourselves—the last is on a level with excreting the waste matter of our food. (2) What then is valuable? Being clapped? No. (3) Then there is no value in being clapped by tongues either, since praise from the masses is just the clapping of tongues. (4) So you have disposed of empty glory; what is left to value? In my opinion it is to act or hold back from action in line with our own proper constitution, the end towards which our practices and forms of expertise are directed. (5) Every expertise aims at this, that its product should be suited for the function for which it has been produced. This is the aim of the gardener who tends the vines and the horse-breaker or dog-trainer. (6) And the upbringing of children and education—what are they directed to?

(7) This then is where value lies; and if things go well in this respect alone, you will not try to get other things for yourself. Won't you then stop valuing many other things as well? (8) Otherwise, you won't be free or self-sufficient or devoid of passion; (9) since you are bound to be envious and jealous and suspicious of those who can deprive you of those things, and to scheme against those who possess what is valued by you. In short, anyone who feels the need of any of those things is bound to be in a state of turmoil, and, what is more, to blame the gods often. (10) But if you respect and value your own understanding, you will make yourself pleasing in your own eyes, well harmonized with human beings, and in concord with the gods, that is to say, praising what they assign and have allotted.

[17] Up, down, and in a circle are the movements of the elements, but the movement of virtue is none of those but is something more divine and goes smoothly on a path that is hard to understand.

[18] (1) How oddly they behave! They do not want to speak well of people living at the same time and in their company, but they themselves attach great importance to being well spoken of by future generations whom they have never seen or will see. (2) This is close to being aggrieved that earlier generations have not said good things about you.

[19] If something is hard for you to achieve, do not suppose that it is beyond human capacity; rather, if something is possible and suitable for human beings, consider that it is within your reach too.

[20] (1) In sport, someone may have scratched me with his nails or, charging forward, butted me with his head. But we do not label him as a bad character or hit him back or suspect him afterwards of plotting against us. True, we keep on our guard, not treating him as an enemy or with suspicion, but with good-natured avoidance. (2) We should behave in the same way in the other areas of life; we should overlook many things in those who are, so to speak, our opponents in the game. (3) As I said, it is impossible to avoid them without suspecting them or hating them.

[21] If someone can prove me wrong and show me I am not correct in what I think or do, I shall be glad to change. I am looking for the truth, by which no one has ever been harmed; the one who is harmed is he who persists in his own self-deception and ignorance.

[22] For my part, I do what is appropriate for me, and other things do not distract me. They are either lifeless, irrational, or have lost their way and are ignorant of the right path.

[23] (1) In the case of irrational animals and objects and things in general, treat them with generosity of spirit and freedom of mind, since you have rationality and they do not. In the case of human beings, since they have rationality too, treat them in a sociable way too. (2) In all things call on the gods, and it should make no difference how long you do these things; three hours spent in this way are enough.

[24] Alexander of Macedon and his stable boy were brought to the same level in death. Either they were taken into the same generative principles of the universe or they were scattered equally into atoms.

[25] Reflect on how many events, both physical and psychological together, are happening simultaneously in each of us in the same brief moment of time; then you will not be surprised that many more things, or rather all the events in the single and whole entity we call the universe, exist at the same time.

[26] (1) If someone asks you, 'How is the name Antoninus written?', surely you wouldn't spell out each of the letters in an intense way? Wouldn't you enumerate the letters calmly, spelling each of them out in turn? (2) What then if people are angry? Surely you will not be angry in turn? (3) In the same way, remember in your life here that every appropriate action is a completed sum of certain numbers. You should observe these and not be troubled, and if people are resentful, not be resentful in turn but complete your project methodically.

[27] How cruel it is not to permit people to aim at what appears to them to be suitable and beneficial to themselves. But in a way you are not allowing them to do this whenever you are indignant at the fact that they are doing wrong. Surely, indeed, they are drawn towards what is suitable and beneficial to themselves. 'But it is not so.' Well then teach them and show them— do not be indignant.

[28] Death is relief from reacting to sensations, from the motives that pull us around like a puppet, and from the twists and turns of the intellect, and from service to the flesh.

[29] It is disgraceful if, in this life, when your body does not give up the struggle, your mind should do so first.

[30] (1) Take care you are not turned into a Caesar, or stained with the purple; these things do happen. (2) So keep yourself simple, good, sincere, dignified, unpretentious, a friend of justice, reverential towards the gods, kind, affectionate, and vigorous in doing what is fitting. (3) Struggle to remain the kind of person that philosophy wanted to make you. (4) Respect the gods, look after human beings. Life is short; the one harvest of our existence is a holy disposition and actions serving the common good.

(5) In all things, act as a pupil of Antoninus: his energy for actions done in line with reason, his evenness of temper in all situations, his piety, the serenity of his expression, the sweetness of his character, the absence of vacuous pride, the ambition to understand situations. (6) How in general he let nothing pass without examining it carefully and coming to a clear understanding; (7) how he put up with those who blamed him without justification, and did not blame them in return; how he was never rushed into anything, and how he refused to listen to malicious gossip; (8) how acute he was in examining people's characters and action; not ready to criticize; not anxious at every rumour; not suspicious; not a sophist; (9) how he was satisfied with little, for instance, in housing, bedding, clothing, food, service; (10) and how hard-working he was, and how patient. (11) How he was able to keep on at his work until evening, because of his frugal diet not needing to relieve himself except at the usual time; (12) his stability and consistency in friendships; (13) how he tolerated frank opposition to his views and was pleased if someone showed him a better way; (14) how he was reverential towards the gods without superstition; (15) so may your last hour may find you with as clear a conscience as his.

[31] Sober up, recall yourself, and, now that you have shaken off sleep and seen that what disturbed you were dreams, having woken up again, look at these things as you looked at those.

[32] (1) I consist of a poor body and a mind. To the poor body, all things are indifferent, as it is unable to differentiate between them. (2) To the intellect, all that does not form part of its activity is a matter of indifference; and all that forms part of its activity lies within its control. (3) But even of these it is only concerned with the present; its future and past activities are themselves matters of indifference at that moment.

[33] (1) Exertion in the hand is not out of line with nature nor is exertion in the foot, as long as the foot is doing the work of a foot and the hand the work of a hand. (2) In the same way, then, for a human being, exertion is not out of line with nature for a human being, as long as he is doing the work of a human being. (3) If it is not out of line with nature for him, it is not bad for him either.

[34] What great pleasures have been enjoyed by robbers, effeminates, parricides, and tyrants.

[35] (1) Don't you see how common craftsmen accommodate themselves to laymen up to a point but still hold on to the principle of their expertise and cannot bear to abandon that. (2) Isn't it terrible if the architect and the doctor will show greater respect for the principle of their expertise than the human being for his own, which is shared by him with the gods.

[36] (1) Asia and Europe are just corners in the universe; every ocean is a drop in the universe; Mount Athos is a lump of earth in the universe; the whole of present time is a point in eternity; everything is small, changeable, disappearing. (2) All things come from there, taking their start from that shared ruling centre or else as a secondary effect. (3) So even the lion's gaping jaw, poison, and everything that does harm, such as thorns or a bog, are by-products of things that are sublime and beautiful. (4) So do not form the impression that they are different from the thing that you revere, but reflect on the source of all things.

[37] Whoever sees what is present now has seen everything, both whatever has been from eternity and whatever will be to infinity; everything is of the same kind and form.

[38] (1) Reflect often on the interconnection of all things in the universe and their relationship to each other. (2) All things are in a sense interwoven with each other, and all things are for that reason dear to each other; one thing follows another because of the tensile movement and the common breath and the unity of reality.

[39] Harmonize yourself to the circumstances in which your lot has placed you; and love the people among whom destiny has placed you, but do so truly.

[40] (1) Every instrument, tool, and utensil are in a good state if they do what they are made for; yet there the maker is separate from what is made. (2) But when things are held together by nature the power that made them is inside them and remains there. Therefore, you must respect it more and believe that if you are, and continue to act, in line with its will, everything will be in line with your mind. (3) In the same way, in the universe, its affairs are in line with its mind.

[41] (1) If you treat as good or bad any of the things that fall outside your agency, it must follow that, if you meet bad things of that kind and fail to gain good things of that kind, you will blame the gods and hate the people who are responsible for your failure in one respect or another, or who you suspect will be responsible for them. Indeed, we often do wrong because we differentiate things on this basis. (2) But if we determine that only things that are up to us are good or bad, no reason is left to criticize gods or to adopt a hostile attitude towards another human being.

[42] (1) We are all working together to a single end, some of us knowing this and aware of what we are doing, others without knowing this, as Heraclitus, I think, says that 'those asleep are workers and co-workers in what happens in the universe'. (2) Different people contribute in different ways, and there is ample room also for the person who criticizes and for the one who tries to resist and destroy what is happening; the universe needs that kind of person too. (3) It remains for you to consider into which side you place yourself; he who governs all things will use you well in any case, and will accept you into some part of his co-workers; (4) but do not let your part be that of the cheap and worthless verse in the comedy, which Chrysippus mentions.

[43] Does the sun undertake to do the work of the rain? Or Asclepius the work of the goddess who brings the harvest? What about each of the stars? Aren't they different but working together towards the same end?

[44] (1) If the gods have taken thought about me and what should happen to me, they must have taken thought well; it is not easy to conceive a god who is thoughtless, and for what reason would they be motivated to do me harm? (2) What advantage would that bring to them or the common good, for which, most of all, they exercise providential care? (3) But if they have not taken thought about me as an individual, at all events they have thought about the common good. I must welcome and love these events too as a secondary consequence of that.

(4) But suppose that they take no thought about anything—it is not pious to believe that, or otherwise we should not sacrifice or pray or swear oaths or do the other things that we do in the belief that the gods are there and share our lives. But if the gods take no thought about any of our concerns, even so it is still possible for me to take thought about myself, and it is for me to consider what benefits me. (5) What benefits each of us is what is in line with our constitution and nature; my nature is rational and political.

(6) As Antoninus, my city and fatherland is Rome, as a human being it is the universe. It is only what benefits these cities which is good for me.

[45] (1) What happens to each of us benefits the whole; this should be enough. (2) But if you look more carefully, you will see that, in general, what benefits one person also benefits others. (3) But here 'benefit' should be taken in its more common sense of applying to things that are neither good nor bad.

[46] Just as you are sickened by the displays in the amphitheatre and such places because the same things are seen again and again, and the monotony makes the scene tedious, you have the same reaction to life as a whole; everything, high and low, is the same and comes from the same. For how long then?

[47] (1) Think constantly of the people of all kinds, and of all kinds of occupation, and of all varieties of race, who have died and so bring your thoughts down to Philistion, Phoebus, and Origanion. (2) Now move on to other groups of people. (3) We are bound to pass over there where so many brilliant orators, so many serious-minded philosophers have gone—Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates, so many heroes of past time, and later so many generals, and tyrants. (4) Beside these, Eudoxus, Hipparchus, Archimedes, others with intellectual genius, generous-spirited, hard-working, rogues, self-willed people, who mock the transitory and ephemeral nature of human life, such as Menippus and people like that.
(5) As regards all these people, reflect that they have long since been laid in earth. Why would be terrible for them? Why indeed for those whose names are completely lost? (6) So there is one thing that is of most value: to live out your life in truth and justice and be kind to those who are false and unjust.

[48] (1) Whenever you want to cheer yourself up, think of the good qualities of those who live with you: such as the energy of one, the decency of

another, the generosity of another, and some other quality in someone else. (2) There is nothing so cheering as the images of the virtues displayed in the characters of those who live with you, and grouped together as far as possible. (3) So you should keep them ready at hand.

[49] Surely you don't resent the fact that you only weigh so many pounds and not three hundred? So why resent the fact that you have to live only so many years and not more? As you are content with the quantity of matter allocated to you, be content with the quantity of time.

[50] (1) Try to persuade them; but act even against their will, whenever the principle of justice leads you to do so. (2) But if someone uses force to resist you, change your approach to accepting it and not being hurt, and use the setback to express another virtue. Remember too that your motive was formed with reservation and that you were not aiming at the impossible. At what then? A motive formed with reservation. (3) But you have achieved this; what we proposed to ourselves is actually happening.

[51] The lover of glory thinks that his own good consists in the activity of other people, and the lover of pleasure thinks that it consists in his own experience; he who has understanding sees it as consisting in his own action.

[52] It is possible to form no judgement about this and not to be disturbed in your mind; things in themselves do not have the nature to create our judgements.

[53] Acquire the habit of attending carefully to what is said by someone else and, as far as possible, enter into the mind of the speaker.

[54] What does not benefit the hive does not benefit the bee.

[55] If the crew spoke badly of the captain or the sick of the doctor, would they be concerned with anything other than his capacity to ensure the safety of those passengers or the health of his patients?

[56] How many who entered the world with me have already gone.

[57] To the jaundiced, honey seems bitter, to those suffering from rabies, water is terrifying, to children a ball is a fine thing. Why then am I angry?

Or does it seem to you that false opinions have less power over people than bile over the jaundiced and poison in one suffering from rabies.

[58] No one will prevent you from living in line with the rationality of your own nature; nothing will happen to you which is out of line with the rationality of universal nature.

[59] What sort of people are these whom they wish to please and by what kind of outcomes and what kind of actions! How quickly time will cover everything and how much it has already covered!

Commentary

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Book 1

As outlined in the Introduction to Book 1, the book can be seen as falling into five groups: (1) family as early models, (2) early tutors and progressive understanding of philosophy, (3) advice and examples of conduct from tutors and older friends, (4) adoptive father, Antoninus Pius, and (5) and benefits from the gods (compare Hadot and Luna 1998: xlv–xlvi). These groups are used as a framework here; numbered references in bold are to the books and chapters of the *Meditations*.

On the unusual format and style of this book, see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 1–2. My translation reproduces the list-like arrangement. Marcus mostly uses only two types of expression, adjectival forms (*to* plus neuter of adjective) and *to* plus infinitives (except in **1.16.26–1.16.30**, where there is some variation). I generally translate the infinitives with English equivalents ('to *x*' or 'that *x* was the case'). Marcus uses 'and' (usually *kai*) to start each item in a given chapter, but I have not reproduced this style, and provide 'and' only in the last item in a chapter or where it seems needed in the English. In the two long chapters (**1.16, 1.17**), I have subdivided the chapter into paragraphs (see further Note on the Text and Translation).

First Group: Family as Early Models

Notably absent from this section (or from **1.17**) is any attempt to define specifically innate qualities or characteristics transmitted by natural inheritance. This reflects the consistently Stoic approach to ethical development that seems to be assumed in the book, stressing rational responses to influences and the gradual emergence of an ethical belief-structure. By contrast, the Platonic-Aristotelian view, adopted by first- and second-century AD thinkers such as Plutarch and Galen, is that ethical development is based on a combination of innate qualities, non-rational habituation and education (see further Gill 2006: 129–45, 36–46, 2010a:

221–9, also 1983; disputing the view that character was generally supposed to be innate in ancient, esp. Roman, culture). Perhaps for similar reasons, Marcus' comments on his family, which seem designed to highlight ethical influences on him in childhood, are very brief, compared with the much fuller treatment of tutors and other models in later life. Marcus seems to presuppose Stoic ideas about ethical development as 'appropriation' (*oikeiōsis*), but to focus on the later, more fully rational, or self-conscious, aspect of this process, rather than the earlier or more basic aspects. (See Introd., text to nn. 82–90, also Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 29–32.)

We have quite a lot of background information on the family members named (see Hadot and Luna 1998: lxiii–lxxx), but relatively little of this evidence sheds light on the features noted by Marcus.

1.1 'grandfather Verus'. Marcus Annius Verus was a very rich man (a large-scale manufacturer of tiles), and an important political figure, three times consul, and adviser to three emperors, Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian. We are told he entered the senate (probably over 70 years old), as Hadrian announced his adoption of Antoninus Pius, along with Antoninus' adoption of Marcus and Lucius Verus, in 138 (*HA Vita Antonini* 4.1–4.2). After his father's death, Marcus was adopted by his grandfather, and lived with him until 138, when he moved into the household of Antoninus. See also note on **1.17.3**.

'goodness of character and freedom from anger' (*to kaloēthes*), an unusual, positive but rather unspecific term, and *to aorgēton*, one of many negative terms, though with positive connotations, in Book 1 (see Giavatto 2008: 141–7). Anger, or excessive anger, in more Aristotelian-type writings, is presented as a bad emotion (or passion), and one to which the rich and powerful are particularly liable, in much early Imperial writing on the therapy of emotions (e.g. Plu. *On the Avoidance of Anger (Mor.* 452F–464D), Sen. *Ira*, see, in general, Harris 2001: esp. chs. 9–10); so 'freedom from anger' is more of a commendation than it may seem. In general, Marcus' attitude to anger is strongly negative, in line with Stoic thinking on the passions (see further Introd., text to nn. 130–4).

1.2 'from what I heard or remember about my natural father'. Little is known about Marcus' father (also named Marcus Annius Verus); Birley (1987: 31) suggests he was praetor in 124, when Marcus was 3, and died in that year, hence Marcus' phraseology ('what I heard or remember').

'modesty and manliness': *to aidēmon kai arrenikon*. The coupling seems designed to suggest a combination of gentler and more vigorous virtues, compare the (Greek) *sōphrosunē* and *andreia* ('self-control and courage') in Plato, *R.* 429a–432a, *Plt.* 306a–310a, or *moderatio/temperantia* and *magnitudo animi* in Cicero's Stoic account of the virtues in *Off.* 1. Other refs. to manliness in *Med.* suggest a link between this quality and being Roman (**2.5.1, 3.5.2**).

1.3 'my mother'. Domitia Lucilla also came from a rich and politically distinguished family, and maintained her own household (hosting cultured visitors such as Herodes Atticus) after her husband's death. She joined Marcus in forming part of the family group of Antoninus Pius after his adoption, and was regarded as an influential figure in the imperial circle. The qualities ascribed to her, notably piety and simplicity in life-style, prefigure comparable features in the characterization of Antoninus (freedom from superstition or piety, **1.16.15, 6.30.1, 6.30.5**, and absence of personal extravagance, **1.16.26, 6.30.9**).

1.4.1 'great-grandfather'. Lucius Catilius Severus was the grandfather of Marcus' mother; he was a leading politician under Trajan and Hadrian and a potential successor of Hadrian as emperor. His distinction, along with that of M. Annius Verus, Marcus' paternal grandfather, may have contributed to Hadrian's decision to choose Marcus as his eventual successor, after Antoninus.

1.4.2 'not to have attended schools open to the public . . . to spend lavishly'. Catilius, presumably, paid for some of Marcus' many home tutors or at least urged his mother to do so. There is an implied contrast between appropriate lavishness in this area and his mother's general lack of extravagance (**1.3**). In fact, the respective merits of being tutored at home or in a school were widely debated (e.g. Quint. *Inst.* 1.2), even among the most wealthy people.

Second Group: Early Tutors and Progressive Understanding of Philosophy

As highlighted earlier (Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 3–4), Marcus' ordering and presentation of influential figures is thematic, rather than, chronological. We learn from *HA, Vita Marci* 2.2–2.3 that Marcus had eighteen tutors: four elementary ones, three language teachers (one in Greek and two in

Latin), four in rhetoric (three in Greek and one in Latin), six in philosophy, and one in law. Some of these were professional teachers, others distinguished politicians who would certainly not have been paid for their instruction, e.g. Fronto, Maximus, Rusticus, and Severus. Marcus' references in *Med.* 1 are highly selective, including two of the elementary ones (**1.5–1.6**), all six philosophers (**1.7–1.9, 1.13–1.15**), but only one of the other teachers, Fronto (**1.11**), along with Alexander, who was Marcus' secretary (see further Champlin 1980: 118–19). Marcus' reorders them into two groups: **1.5–1.9** (Marcus' progressive entry into philosophy) and **1.10–1.15**, older, adult friends and advisers, including tutors (see Hadot and Luna 1998: xlii–xlv). The implied theme of **1.5–1.9** is Marcus' gradually deepening understanding of philosophy and its significance, which is, essentially, an ethical one for him, although the first two tutors referred to are not philosophers.

1.5.1 'my tutor'. This appears to be his earliest tutor, responsible for early upbringing, not named, perhaps because he is regarded as a member of the household (like the family members in **1.1–1.4**); we are told Marcus was much saddened by his death (*HA, Vita Pii* 10.5).

'not to have become a supporter'. Here and in **1.6**, Marcus seems to focus on relatively simple moral messages, that a child could understand, but also ones that are important for the life of a future member of the ruling élite. He was discouraged from sharing the widely held, and passionate, enthusiasm about rival teams in the public games held in the Roman amphitheatre ('Greens . . . Blues' are chariot teams, 'Round' and 'Long Shields' are gladiators); on Marcus on games see also note on 6.46. The training 'to put up with hardship', **1.5.2** (in spite of his wealth) reflects the family style (see note on **1.3**); 'to be reluctant to listen to slander', **1.5.3**, is relevant advice for a future emperor and matches a quality ascribed to Antoninus in **6.30.7** (and Marcus himself as emperor, *HA, Vita Marci* 11.1).

1.6.1 'Diognetus'. He was one of four elementary tutors, responsible for teaching painting; but Marcus ascribes to him a wide-ranging influence in ethics and encouragement towards philosophy and an ascetic life-style. The chapter seems to range broadly over Marcus' childhood and youth and is not confined to a specific educational period.

1.6.2 'to disbelieve the stories': scepticism about magic and lack of superstition again prefigures one of Antoninus' qualities (**1.16.15**), as does 'to be ready to accept plain (frank) speaking (*parrhēsia*)' (compare **6.30.13**).

1.6.3 'cock-fights': (with quails), a popular ancient, and modern, sport. The ancient life of Marcus presents him as initially 'good-natured' and happy to go to the games or to take part in sports or cock-fighting, but led by the influence of philosophy to a more serious and reserved way of life (though 'this did not spoil the friendliness in him' (*HA, Vita Marci* 5.2–5.4, trans. Birley 2012b: 143). Marcus' youthful exuberance is also apparent in many of the earlier letters to Fronto (see Fleury 2012: 72–4). Marcus' self-presentation here is compatible with these reports, though the stress falls on the restraining influence of philosophical advice.

1.6.5 'to have become familiar with philosophy'. Marcus, here and in **3.2.6** (see note) uses the verb *oikeiousthai* which is cognate to *oikeiōsis* ('familiar-ization' or 'appropriation'), the Stoic technical term for ethical development LS, vol. 1: 351. Despite the generally non-technical vocabulary in *Med.*, the phraseology might convey the idea that Marcus' familiarization with philosophy formed an integral part of his ethical development. Two of the philosophical teachers named are known to be second-century AD: Baccheius, a Platonist, and Basilides, perhaps a Stoic (emended from the unknown name 'Tandasis' found in the manuscripts); Marcian is unknown. When Marcus says he wrote 'dialogues' as a child, this may just mean 'phil-osophical writings' (see further Hadot and Luna 1998: lxxxii–lxxxiv).

'to have wanted a camp-bed'. Marcus' attraction to the ascetic life-style is also noted by *HA, Vita Marci* 2.6 (Marcus was only 12 at this time). The style evokes Cynicism, a radical philosophical movement which influenced Stoicism throughout its history. Imperial Stoics such as Seneca (Griffin 1977: 297–8) and Epictetus (Long 2002: 58–61) expressed admiration for the Cynic ethical commitment and austerity, though they did not generally adopt the Cynic life-style (on which see Desmond 2008: ch. 2). 'Spartan' is an emenda-tion for 'Greek' in the manuscripts, which makes less good sense in this context (see further Hadot and Luna 1998: notes complémentaires: 20 fn. 19).

1.7. This chapter describing the influence of Rusticus is an important piece of evidence for Marcus' intellectual and ethical development. Rusticus' influence began during Marcus' mid-20s, after he had been studying Latin rhetoric with Fronto to help him prepare for his future imperial role (during 139–45, following his adoption by Antoninus in 138). Another important document in this period is a letter from Marcus to Fronto, in which he describes the powerful impact on him of reading the writings of the early (unorthodox) Stoic, Aristo:

Aristo's books are a source of joy to me at present, and at the same time a torment; when they show me a better way, then of course they bring me joy, but when they show me how far my character falls short of these better things, your pupil blushes over and over again and grows angry with himself, because, at the age of twenty-five, I have not yet absorbed any of these excellent teachings into my soul.

(Fronto, *ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.13, translation as in Hard and Gill 2011: 138 (letter 21). For the text of this letter, see Haines 1919, vol. 1: 214–16 or Van den Hout 1988: 67–8) It is widely accepted that Aristo is the early Stoic; see Introd., text to nn. 91–7, van Ackeren 2011: 48, and not the jurist suggested by Champlin 1980: 77 fn. 85.

This evidence has sometimes been interpreted as showing that Marcus underwent a 'conversion' from rhetoric to philosophy in this period, deterring him from future close engagement with rhetoric and leading to a much cooler relationship with Fronto (Birley 1987: chs. 4–5, Rutherford 1989: 103–7, though with qualifications). However, there are problems with this view. It is clear from **1.5** that Marcus' attraction to philosophy goes back much earlier (perhaps age 12). This attraction was a source of concern to Antoninus at the time of his adoption of Marcus in 138, leading to the programme of rhetorical training with Fronto (*HA, Vita Marci* **2.6**; see further Van den Hout 1999: viii–ix). Also, although Marcus seems to have finished intensive training with Fronto about this time (when 25), he was given, and accepted, continuing advice on rhetoric and its value by Fronto for a number of years. He used this advice in the speeches which he needed, increasingly, to give in the senate and elsewhere as his political role developed (Champlin 1980: 121–30). Indeed, C. Kasulke, in a full-scale study of this topic, argues that the idea that there was a conflict between philosophy and rhetoric in the second century AD has been much exaggerated. He also suggests that the style of the *Meditations* reflects closely the training of Fronto, thus offering a further indication that there was no decisive break (2005: 188–382, esp. 272–326, but note also the reservations about the last point in van Ackeren 2011: 314–15 fn. 1335).

Taking these points into account, we can offer a more plausible view of the implications of **1.7** and the letter on Aristo (see Hadot and Luna 1998: lxxxvi–lxxxvii). The influence of Rusticus and the thinkers he introduced led Marcus to a deeper understanding of what philosophy meant. He saw that this was not just a matter of adopting a certain style of living or acquiring technical, and perhaps superficial, knowledge of philosophy, which is what seems to be described in **1.6**. Rusticus helped Marcus to see the force of a theme stressed by Epictetus (mentioned in **1.7**) and Seneca: that the overall aim of philosophy is to become an ethically better person,

in a way that profoundly shapes one's whole character and all aspects of one's life (Introd., text to n. 17). A related theme, implied at the end of Book I (**1.17.22**) is that studying logic and physics is only valuable if it promotes this practical ethical aim. This understanding of the meaning of philosophy also affected Marcus' judgements about what rhetorical exercises were or were not worth doing, as well as how to write and read properly. But all this is consistent with Marcus' continuing to study rhetoric effectively in order to play his role as a leading politician and intended emperor, a role whose performance he conceived in Stoic, as well as conventional, terms (Introd., text to nn. 119–29).

'Rusticus'. Quintus Junius Rusticus was a leading politician under Marcus and perhaps his closest adviser, acting as consul in 162 and prefect of the city from 160 until his death in 167 or 168. He was a descendant (son or grandson) of Quintus Junius Arulenus Rusticus, a major figure in the so-called 'Stoic opposition'. These were Stoic-influenced politicians who did not reject imperial rule as such but who opposed specific acts by specific emperors on moral grounds (see Griffin 1976: 363–6). The older Rusticus had defended Thrasea Paetus against Nero (66) and was condemned to death by Domitian for writing a biography of the younger Cato (on Cato, Thrasea and other such figures and their significance for Marcus, see first note on 1.14.2).

1.7.1 'correction and therapy of my character'. The idea of philosophy as a means of therapy for the mind or character was promoted strongly by the Stoics and was adopted widely in philosophy between the first century BC and second century AD (see Nussbaum 1994, Tieleman 2003, Gill 2010a: 280–300).

1.7.2 'writing on purely theoretical matters' (*theōrēmata*). This implies that, for Marcus as well as Epictetus, theory (even ethical theory) is subordinate to the aim of becoming an ethically better person; see Introd., text to n. 170.

'writing stylish and imaginary descriptions' (*phantasioplēktōs*). The Greek is ambiguous, meaning either writing moralizing essays or presenting oneself in a moralistic, self-glorifying, light. Here and in the previous point ('delivering little sermons', i.e. protreptic discourses), Marcus repudiates forms of writing which might *look* ethically uplifting for you or others but which he sees as really not much more than exercises in rhetoric or self-presentation. This represents a more subtle form of self-criticism than the

rejection of 'sophistic' (*sophistikon*) ambition' and 'oratory (*rhētorikē*) and poetic composition and stylistic elegance'. Both these phrases evoke the speech-making and literary exercises which were characteristic of the 'Second Sophistic' that was a dominant cultural movement in this period (see Whitmarsh 2005 and Holford-Stevens 2012: 110–14).

1.7.4 'dressed like a philosopher'. Both the text (*stolion* or *stolē*) and the interpretation are difficult. But Marcus seems to have in mind wearing just a tunic (not the full Roman garb of the toga) as a mark of philosophical asceticism or indifference to convention; compare the ascetic style of **1.6.8**, which he now sees as merely a superficial response to philosophy.

1.7.5 'to write letters in a simple style'. Marcus rejects the idea, typical of the Second Sophistic, of the letter as an elaborate art-form (see Hadot and Luna 1998: notes complémentaires: 23 fn. 12). In general, Stoicism prized a verbal style that was simple and designed to express the core relevant content (LS 31 H, see further van Ackeren 2011: 308–16).

1.7.6 'to those who have angered'; the subject of anger comes up again in connection with Rusticus in **1.17.14**, this time relating to Marcus' need to restrain his anger with Rusticus. But the linkage may not be significant; here, at any rate, Marcus is simply commending Rusticus' humane treatment of other people.

1.7.7 'read with precision'; these and the following points are all indicators of the rejection of the kind of superficial responses (in reading or listening) whose inadequacy Rusticus helped Marcus to recognize.

1.7.8 'to have been introduced to [literally, 'to have met' or 'encountered'] the discourses [*hupomnēmata*, notes or memoirs] of Epictetus. Marcus seems to mean, quite literally, that he had not read Epictetus' *Discourses* before (although they were quite well-known in this period). The words have sometimes been taken as meaning that Rusticus lent him his own notes on, or reports of, Epictetus' teachings, instead of those of Arrian (which, for us, are the only record of Epictetus' oral teachings in practical ethics); but this seems much less probable (Hadot and Luna 1998: lxxxvii–lxxxix). However, it is likely that Rusticus also explained what he saw as the ethical significance of Epictetus' teaching, which is the theme that pervades the whole of this chapter. (On the significance of Epictetus for Marcus, see Introd., text to nn. 16–17, 56–9, 62–5, 187–90; and Gill 2012a.)

1.8 'Apollonius'. Apollonius of Chalcedon (near the Bosporus), like Sextus (**1.9**), but unlike Rusticus, was a professional philosopher-teacher (Stoic). He was invited to Rome by Antoninus as emperor to instruct Marcus, possibly when Marcus was about 30 years old. Ironic anecdotes about his move to Rome for this purpose suggest profiteering motives or arrogance (Luc. *Demonax* 31; *HA, Vita Pii* 10.4). But these stories are superficial, whereas this chapter is consistently positive about the ethical content of Apollonius' teaching. The three chapters **1.7–1.9** seem designed as a unit, the first showing how Rusticus helped Marcus to form a deeper grasp of the meaning of Stoic philosophy, and the next two depicting the qualities of character and intellect that his Stoic teachers helped him to understand over the next few years. The qualities described evoke those of the Stoic normative wise person or 'sage'; but here they are presented as, at least partly, embodied in the two teachers ('by a living example', **1.8.4**, 'the example of a family', **1.9.2**); on exemplarity as a recurrent theme in this book, see Introd. to Book 1. Epictetus' characterization of these qualities seems to be a strong underlying influence in **1.8** and **1.9**. So perhaps we should see Marcus' teachers as having discussed Epictetus' teachings or the theories on which they depend, as well as exemplifying the ethical implications in their own mode of teaching and interpersonal behaviour.

In **1.8**, the focus is first on the mental state of the wise person, then on the emotional implications, then on appropriate (sage-like) attitudes to teaching philosophy and accepting benefits. 'Freedom' (**1.8.1**) is a mark of wisdom in Stoic ethics, signifying freedom from error and passion (Epict. *Diss.* 4.1; see further Bobzien 1998: 339–41). It brings the ability 'unequivocally' (*anamphilogōs*) to ignore 'the dice of fortune' (*akubeuton*), that is, to disregard the external events conventionally seen as good or bad, but viewed in Stoic theory as 'matters of indifference' in comparison with virtue (LS 58, see further Introd., text to nn. 87–97). The language used (being guided by 'reason', ignoring 'the dice of fortune') may also evoke a striking Platonic description of emotional self-control (*R.* 10, 604a–604d). **1.8.3**, 'to be always the same' (under emotional pressure) evokes the consistency of the wise person (compare LS 63 L–M); the same feature appears in Marcus' characterization of Antoninus (**1.16.8**) and is ascribed to Marcus himself by Dio Cassius (72.34.5). The theme of staying free from passion or misguided emotion in (what are conventionally regarded as) disasters such as 'the loss of a child' is prominent in Epictetus (e.g. *Ench.* 3, *Diss.* 3.24.84–3.24.88); on emotions in Stoicism and *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 130–9).

The chapter goes on to suggest that Apollonius' conduct as teacher was informed by a similar state of mind; hence, he did not show impatience (or

make difficulties, *duscherantikon*) in giving explanation (e.g. in expounding texts), **1.8.5**. The low valuation placed on purely technical skill in philosophy (for 'theoretical matters', *theōrēmata*, **1.8.5**, compare **1.7.2**) reflects the view discussed in connection with **1.7**, that the overall aim of philosophy is to make one ethically better and not just to develop intellectual expertise. **1.8.7**: 'how to accept apparent favours'; the word 'apparent' (*dokousas*) expresses the Stoic view, consistently maintained in *Med.*, that material or social benefits are 'matters of indifference'. Marcus' phrasing, esp. 'without being influenced by them or disregarding them insensitively' seems to evoke the (quite subtle) Stoic position that the value in giving or receiving gifts lies solely in doing so in the right state of mind. (See Sen. *Ben.* 2.31–2.35; also Griffin and Inwood 2011: Introd., 6, and Sherman 2005.)

1.9 'Sextus'. Sextus of Chaeronea (in Boeotia in mainland Greece) was nephew of the famous Plutarch, Platonic philosopher and biographer. Sextus was a Stoic teacher at Rome; and contemporaries were struck by Marcus' admiration for him and the fact that he continued to attend Sextus' lectures even when he became emperor, at age 40 in 161 (Hadot and Luna 1998: xcv–xcvi).

   In this, the third of three chapters on Marcus' gradually deepening understanding of the significance of Stoic philosophy, the focus is on the ethics of interpersonal behaviour and attitudes, underpinned by moral understanding and character. It is worth comparing Marcus' account here with a doxographical summary of the wise person's social skill.

Since the virtuous person is affable in conversation and charming and encouraging and prone to pursue good will and friendship through his conversation, he fits in as well as possible (*euarmoston*) with the majority of people; and that is why he is lovable and graceful and persuasive, and again flattering and shrewd and opportune and quick-witted and easy-going and unfussy and straightforward and un-deceptive.

(Stob. 2.108.5–2.108.11 (11m), trans. Inwood and Gerson 1997: 227, slightly modified = *SVF* 3.630.) Underlying this description is the assumption that the wise person's understanding and state of mind ensures that he will act well in all contexts of life (Stob. 2.102.20–2.102.22). Similarly, in **1.9**, there is an implied link between the description of Sextus' personal charm and skilful sociability and his grasp of core ethical principles. Note (**1.9.3**) 'the life according to nature', i.e. the Stoic idea of the goal of a human life (compare LS 63 A–C); and 'secure (*katalēptikōs*) and methodical discovery

and organization of the principles' (**1.9.8**), evoking the standard Stoic term for complete knowledge, *katalēpsis* (LS 41). Note also (**1.9.7**), 'the ability to fit in with everyone' (*euarmoston*), compare Stobaeus' description of the wise person, cited earlier.

Marcus' full characterization of Antoninus in **1.16** also focuses on skilful and attractive interpersonal behaviour, relying on sound judgement, and this is a prominent theme in some of the more subtle and independently thought-out reflections in *Med.* (e.g. **3.4**, **5.6**, **5.28**, **5.31**, **6.20**). This chapter (**1.9.6**, 'patience with ordinary people and those whose opinions are not based on reflection') also prefigures the asymmetrical or unequal relationship that figures as a recurrent idea in those chapters (see note on **2.1**). Another salient theme of those chapters is indicated in **1.9.9**: 'to be at once completely free from passion (*apathestaton*) and yet full of affection for other people (*philostorgotaton*)'. Marcus, perhaps following Epictetus, stresses that trying to be free from misguided emotions or passions (*pathē*) is not incompatible with expressing natural affection (*philostorgia*). The Stoics see the latter as a primary human motive, especially manifested in parental love but capable of being developed so as to inform all one's interpersonal and communal relationships and attitudes to human beings in general. This development goes hand in hand, ideally, with the other main strand in ethical development, gaining understanding of the good and recognizing its absolute value, a knowledge which confers freedom from passions based on bad ethical judgements. (See Epict. *Diss.* 1.11, 3.2.1–3.2.5 taken with Long 2002: 77–9, 231–58; also Reydams-Schils 2005: chs. 2, 4, 2012: 442–52; Graver 2007: ch. 8; Introd., text to nn. 82, 106–9.) A more surprising feature is **1.9.2** 'the example of a household governed by fatherly authority'. One might have expected this (very Roman) ideal of a household guided by respect for the *paterfamilias* to appear in connection with Antoninus or some other member of Marcus' family. But it may be included, early in the chapter, as just one, rather obvious, example of the idea of admirable social conduct, underpinned by philosophically informed moral understanding, which is the hall-mark of the whole characterization of Sextus and of the ideals he transmitted to Marcus.

Third Group: Advice and Examples of Conduct from Tutors and Older Friends

The next set of chapters seems at first glance to fall into two groups: **1.10**– **1.11**, grammar and rhetoric teachers, but taken out of chronological

sequence and **1.12–1.15**, philosophy teachers (in addition to those in **1.7–1.9**). However, the connecting thread seems to be that these are all older people, including some former teachers (mostly philosophical), who were also friends and whom Marcus sees as contributing in different ways to his ethical understanding (see further Hadot and Luna 1998: xlii–xlv). There is less focus on the impact of Stoic philosophy in this group, though this remains implicit throughout, and Catulus and Maximus were Stoics; this group also paves the way for the key exemplar, Antoninus Pius, and the review of influences in **1.17**, presented as the benefits of the gods.

1.10.1 'Alexander the language teacher'. Alexander was invited from Cotyaeum (in Phrygia, that is, in Asia Minor or modern Turkey) by Antoninus to act as *grammaticus* in Greek for Marcus probably around 135 when he was 14. Alexander's role was to improve the boy's style in writing or speaking Greek, which is referred to here, and also his critical understanding of Greek literature (Alexander wrote commentaries on Homer and Herodotus). An earlier pupil of Alexander's, at Cotyaeum, was Aelius Aristides, a sophist (professional public speaker), who took advantage of Alexander's role at the court to establish a reputation in Rome (in 144). Aelius' eulogy on his teacher, written after his death around 150, praises his wide learning, his lack of worldly ambition, and his readiness to devote himself to the relatively low-status role of a language teacher, initiating his pupils in the 'mysteries' of Greek culture (Hadot and Luna 1998: xcvii–xcix).

1.10.2 'not to be over-critical'. As in other cases (e.g. Apollonius, **1.8.6**, Sextus, **1.9.8**), Marcus focuses not on specialist knowledge or expertise but on the ethical quality of the person as this comes out in the way he treats other people. Despite his deep knowledge (and unlike his contemporary Apollonius Dyscolus, compare Farquharson 1944: 273), Alexander avoided explicit correction of his pupils, preferring 'some other tactful indirect prompting' (**1.10.2**). As well as showing a sound pedagogic sense, this practice reflects the interpersonal adroitness praised in the case of Sextus (**1.9**) and implies a similarly humane outlook.

1.11 'Fronto'. Marcus Cornelius Fronto (*c*.95–*c*.167) came from a well-off family, probably of equestrian rank, in Cirta (in Numidia, in Roman North Africa). He completed his education at Rome and became a successful advocate in the law-courts. He had a political career under Hadrian and Antoninus, including the consulship (in 143), helped, no doubt, by his role

as orator and teacher of Marcus. After Marcus' adoption by Antoninus in 138, Fronto became his teacher of Latin rhetoric; this involved detailed study of Latin language and literature, with a view to developing Marcus' effectiveness as a public speaker. Much is known about this educational process because of the discovery in the nineteenth century of a large number of letters between Fronto and Marcus (and others), covering the period 139–67. Fronto's teaching of Marcus went on intensively during 139–45, and thereafter more infrequently and mainly by letter. (On the idea that this shift reflected Marcus' 'conversion' from rhetoric to philosophy, see general note on **1.7**.)

The letters also bring out a close, highly affectionate, relationship between the two men, especially during 139–45. This has been seen by one scholar (Richlin 2006) as revealing an erotic, even sexual, relationship in the style of Greek educational pederasty. But this would seem unlikely on a number of grounds, including Marcus' negative comments about pederasty in **1.16.7**, compare **1.17.13**. The effusive, or passionate, style can be seen as a way of establishing 'epistolary intimacy' (Fleury 2012: 66), or as a means by which the two men negotiated the socially delicate relationship between the 'master', a teacher who was also a distinguished public figure, and his younger pupil, who was subordinate in the educational process but vastly more powerful as the future emperor. It might seem surprising, in view of their intimacy, at least during 139–45, that Marcus' comments here are so brief, especially compared with the fuller treatment of other teachers or advisers in **1.7–1.9** and **1.14–1.15**. But, given Marcus' single-minded focus in Book 1 on important contributions to his own ethical development and his stress on the significance of Stoic philosophy in this connection, the brevity is less unexpected. As it happens, we can confirm one of the two points made in the chapter by reference to the letters.

'the malice, capriciousness and hypocrisy that are characteristic of absolute rule (*turannikē*)'. The letters do not contain this theme, though it might well have appeared in their discussions or in lost letters. In one letter, Marcus tells Fronto that he has learnt from him to tell the truth and to avoid deceit or pretence (Fronto, *ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.13, Van den Hout 1988: 44, line 24), but without specific reference to monarchy. The connection between absolute rule and corruption of moral character is a major recurrent theme of Greek and Latin literature and philosophy, and several of Marcus' imperial predecessors (e.g. Tiberius or Domitian) offered notorious examples of the features mentioned here. Marcus' comments on how to exercise the imperial role in Book 1 and elsewhere show his acute

awareness of the need to counteract any such tendency in himself (see esp. **6.30.1** and **1.16.8**, **1.16.10**, **1.16.22**, **1.16.24**, **1.16.29**).

'those whom we call patricians (*eupatridai*) are rather lacking in natural affection (*astorgoteroi*)'. Fronto comments that, in general, natural affection (*philostorgia*) is not a Roman characteristic and that there is not even a Latin word for this quality (*ad Verum* 1.6, Van den Hout 1988: 111, line 17; compare *ad Amicos* 1.3, Van den Hout 1988: 173, line 15). Marcus, writing to Fronto, addresses him as 'most affectionate person' (*philostorge anthrōpe*), (*de Feriis Alsiensibus* 4, Van den Hout 1988: 234, line 13). There is no explicit link in the letter between lack of affection and the Roman patrician class; but, Fronto's comments, made by a provincial originating from outside this class (like Cicero, he was a 'new man', *novus homo*, in the senatorial order) seem to reflect his background (see Hadot and Luna 1998: c–ci). The highly affectionate tone of much of the correspondence between the two men underlines the significance of these comments. For *philostorgia* and its cognates in *Med.* see **1.9.9**, **1.17.18**, **2.5.1**, **6.30.2**, **11.18.18**.

1.12 'Alexander the Platonist'. This seems to be Alexander of Seleucia (in Asia Minor), a well-known public speaker (sophist), who was summoned by Marcus to his headquarters in Germany (probably in 169/70 to 175) to act as his Greek secretary. His role, a responsible and potentially influential one, was to deal with Marcus' correspondence in Greek, the language widely used in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. Like Apollonius (**1.8**), and other intellectuals who gave public addresses in the age of the 'Second Sophistic', Alexander is the object of negative anecdotes, criticizing his vanity or oratorical elaborateness (Philostr. *VS* 2.5.571). We are told he was nicknamed 'Plato in clay' (*Pēloplattōn*) (Philostr. *VS* 2.5.570), seeming to imply some kind of poor imitation of Plato; and Marcus' adjective ('Platonist') also implies expertise on Plato.

'rarely and only when necessary'. Marcus' comment focuses on one salient ethical message that he took from his association with Alexander, one that is linked with the latter's role in handling his Greek correspondence. The same message is also stressed in Seneca, *Ep.* 106.1. The focus on ethics rather than simply technical expertise is in line with the overall character of Book 1 (see **1.8**); the close attention to the ethics of interpersonal and social conduct mirrors **1.9**. The Greek word translated as 'social relationships' (*kathēkonta*) is a Stoic technical term for 'appropriate actions' (LS 59, translated as *officia*, 'duties', in Cic. *Off.*); for this term see also **6.22**, **6.26.3**.

1.13.1 'Catulus'. Cinna Catulus, a member of a well-known Roman political family and member of the senatorial class; we are also told he taught Marcus about Stoicism, but have no other evidence about his teaching to confirm the points made here.

'not to ignore'. For praise of readiness to accept plain speaking or criticism, see **1.6.4** (Diognetus), **6.30.13** (Antoninus); for trying to reconcile friends when they fall out, compare Fronto's praise of Marcus (*ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.1, Haines 1919–20: 1.70–1.75, Van den Hout 1988: 53–4).

1.13.2 'to commend one's teachers . . . Domitius and Athenodotus'. For this theme, which pervades **1.5–1.11**, see also **1.17.8**; compare Sen. *Ep.* 64, 73. Fronto expresses his gratitude to his rhetoric teacher Athenodotus in his letters, and the latter did so perhaps to his teacher Domitius Afer (who also taught Quintilian).

1.13.3 'genuine love for children'; the idea that parental love is a primary and universal motive in humans (and animals generally), is an assumption of Stoic ethics (Cic. *Fin.* 3.62= LS 57 F(1)); and on *philostorgia*, see final note on 1.11.

1.14 'Severus'. This seems to be Cnaeus Claudius Severus Arabianus, like Marcus, a politician with philosophical interests (he was an adherent of the Aristotelian or Peripatetic school). He was consul in 146 (under Antoninus) and perhaps also prefect of the city. Severus was about ten years older than Marcus, and his son married Marcus' daughter; this relationship may explain the mistaken addition into the manuscripts of 'brother' after his name, not included in this translation (see Hadot and Luna 1998: notes complémentaires: 29–30 fn. 12). The linkage between an Aristotelian thinker and a political ideal with strong Stoic connotations may seem surprising; but the ideal outlined by Marcus was widely shared in this period.

1.14.2 'come to understand Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dio, Brutus'. The Greek is simply 'come to know' (*gnōnai*), but the point seems to be that Severus helped Marcus to understand their political significance fully, since their names and the events of their lives would be well-known to any member of the Roman educated élite. Here especially, Marcus evokes the strand in the Roman exemplary tradition (see Introd. to Book 1 on this tradition) that looks back to earlier historical figures, rather than to contemporaries. These figures were all famous exemplars of principled

opposition to tyrannical rule, in Rome and (in Dio's case) Syracuse. The order of the list is not chronological; we seem to have two pairs, Thrasea and Helvidius, Dio and Brutus (who are paired in Plutarch's series of parallel lives of Greek and Roman politicians), with Cato in the middle.

Thrasea Paetus was forced to kill himself in 66 for trying to maintain senatorial independence under Nero. His son-in-law Helvidius Priscus was executed under Vespasian for similar reasons (in 75), while his son, with the same name, was executed on the same ground under Domitian (in 93). Marcus Porcius Cato, fighting on the Republican side, killed himself in 46 BC, after being defeated in the battle of Thapsus, rather than surrender to Julius Caesar. Cato's death rapidly became exemplary for principled resistance (especially Stoic-inspired) to tyrannical rule. Marcus Junius Brutus, Cato's son-in-law, was one of the people who assassinated Caesar on the Ides of March in 44 BC, and then committed suicide after the Republican forces were defeated by Antony and Octavian at the battle of Philippi in 41 BC. An ancestor of his with the same name had become an exemplar of liberty for expelling Tarquinius Superbus (last king of Rome); this Brutus was one of the first Roman consuls in 509 BC before dying in battle against the Tarquins. The only Greek name in the list refers, almost certainly, to Dio of Syracuse. A pupil of Plato, he made an unsuccessful attempt to replace or modify the tyranny of Dionysius in Syracuse with some of kind of (Platonic-style) philosopher-kingship, and was assassinated in 353 BC. These events were made famous especially by the Seventh Letter written by Plato or attributed to him. A much less likely alternative is Dio Cocceianus of Bithynia (in Asia Minor), later called 'Chrysostom' or 'Golden-mouthed', who was exiled under Domitian.

All these figures were celebrated for dying in the service of political freedom, in the sense of opposition to monarchic rule. Their resistance was seen as informed in each case by philosophical theory. Thrasea and Helvidius (both men of that name), like Cato, were strengthened in their resistance by Stoic ideas; Brutus may have been influenced by his affiliation to Peripatetic philosophy (see Sedley 1997), and Dio's opposition was based on Plato's thinking as presented in the *Republic*. Stoicism, unlike most Greek and Roman political theories, did not advocate or oppose any specific type of constitution in itself; the Stoic-inspired opposition of figures such as Thrasea was directed at the immoral use or abuse of monarchy, not monarchy as such. Marcus' reference to such figures, though initially surprising, makes perfectly good sense, since an explicit and recurrent theme in *Med.* is the need for him to play his

political role in an ethically informed way and to avoid becoming a tyrant or 'turned into a Caesar' (**6.30.1**). (See Brunt 1975, esp. 31–2, Griffin 1976: 363–6, Rutherford 1989: 59–66, Reydams-Schils 2012b: 437–9; on Stoic political theory and Marcus' version of this, see also LS 67, and Introd., text to nn. 116–22.)

'the idea of a state based on equality before the law (*politeias isonomou*), which is administered according to the principles of equality (*isotēs*) and freedom of speech (*isēgoria*), and of a monarchy which values above all the liberty of its subjects'. Marcus' ideal raises two questions: the background of these concepts and what they actually signify, in terms of practical politics, for Marcus. It may be useful to take the second question first. In essence, his norm seems to have been exercise of the imperial role in a way that respected the privileges and political contribution of the senatorial class and which was beneficial, broadly speaking, for the Roman people and its Empire. This was, officially, the policy of virtually every emperor since Augustus, the Roman leader who completed the transition from Republic to Empire (emperor 31 BC–14 AD). But the policy had acquired a more credible character under the five emperors from Nerva (emperor 96–8) onwards, who (like Marcus himself) were leading members of the senatorial class and who owed their imperial status to adoption, rather than inheritance or military success. Why does Marcus characterize this ideal repeatedly in terms (using cognates of *isos*, 'equal') which were the watch-words of Greek, especially Athenian, democracy? The appropriation of these terms for enlightened monarchy or imperial rule was perhaps made easier by Plato's distinction, adopted by Aristotle, between 'arithmetic' (or strict) equality and 'geometric' equality (based on merit) (Pl. *Lg.* 757b–757c, Arist. *EN* 1131a2–1131b18, also Plu. *Mor.* 719A–719C). Marcus may allude to this ideal in saying of Antoninus that he was 'unwavering in rewarding each person according to his worth' (**1.16.5**). But Marcus' adoption of this ideal is made more intelligible by the fact that Stoic political theory, at least of the kind he assumes, did not validate any specific type of political constitutional framework. The aim was to exercise virtue, in playing one's appropriate role, within any political framework, including that of Roman imperial rule. Hence, it would seem, Marcus feels entitled to interpret 'equality' as meaning ethically well-motivated and responsible exercise of imperial power. (See also Farquharson 1944: 459–62, Hadot and Luna 1998: clxxiv–clxxviii; on relevant aspects of Platonic and Aristotelian thought, see Rowe and Schofield 2000: 284–5, 360–5; on Stoic political theory, Schofield 1991: 93–104, Vogt 2008: chs. 2–4; on Marcus, see Gill 2000: 611–15).

1.15 'Maximus'. Claudius Maximus was a leading politician under Hadrian and Antoninus; he was consul, probably in 142–3, and governor of Lower Pannonia in 137 and Upper Pannonia during 150–5. Also, as governor of Africa in 158–9, he was judge at the celebrated trial for witchcraft of the writer and intellectual, Apuleius, author of *The Golden Ass.* Apuleius' defence speech praises Maximus' virtues; his account, though no doubt self-interested, stresses features, including a serious-minded character and sober life-style, a long and effective military career, and fairness, which are compatible with Marcus' picture here. Apuleius presents Maximus as having read both widely and deeply in philosophy; he cites Platonic and Aristotelian works. However, Marcus' coupling of Maximus with Apollonius and Rusticus, as people he was especially glad to have known (**1.17.10**), implies that his main philosophical allegiance was to Stoicism.

As in the case of Apollonius and Sextus (**1.8–1.9**), and, still more, Antoninus (**1.16**), this chapter expands from one or two features to a rather full character-sketch. **1.8–1.9** indicate how qualities of intellect or under-standing (**1.8.2, 1.8.6, 1.9.3, 1.9.8**) underlie the emotional and, especially in **1.9**, interpersonal qualities identified. The focus here is more on the idea of an exceptionally well-balanced character which provides the basis both for remarkable emotional stability and for effective action and interpersonal qualities. Thus, 'a character with a harmonious blend of gentleness and dignity (**1.15.2**) and 'someone whose character is naturally upright' (**1.15.8**) both suggest qualities that are deeply embedded. The description of Maximus' good qualities is formulated both in positive and negative terms. Hence, regarding emotions we find 'to be cheerful' (*euthumon*) (**1.15.2**), alongside negatively phrased qualities such as 'never to be astonished or panic-stricken . . . (**1.15.6**, see further Giavatto 2008: 143–7). In Stoic terms, we find a combination of 'good emotions', *eupatheiai*, and 'freedom from (bad) emotions, *apatheia*, see LS 65 B and E, and Graver 2008: 51–9, 210–11. Similarly, the chapter presents effective and principled activity in both positive and negative ways (e.g. 'readiness to tackle the task in hand', **1.15.4**, and 'never to hang back or be at a loss' (**1.15.6**). In interpersonal rela-tionships, we find a similar pattern: 'ready to help or forgive' (**1.15.7**) and 'no one could have thought that Maximus looked down on him' (**1.15.9**).

Character sketches of the kind found in **1.15** recall, for instance, Aristotle's famous portrait of the magnanimous person, in which the analysis of the ethical virtue involved includes a description of emotional attitudes and patterns of interpersonal behaviour (*EN* 4.3, esp. 1124b6–1125a16). However, it is worth keeping in mind that Marcus' aim in Book 1 is not so much to provide accounts of other people's character traits or to

analyse the underlying ethical or psychological structure of these, but to encapsulate the ethical messages he has learnt by associating with them. Hence, there are limits to the extent to which here (or in **1.8–1.9, 1.16**) we can expect to find a fully worked out analysis of someone's character. The main focus, as elsewhere, is in identifying the admirable features (here, especially well-balanced character and thoughtful interpersonal behaviour) that Marcus has learnt to appreciate and to try to embody in his own life.

1.16 'my father'. This is Marcus' adoptive father, Antoninus Pius (born as Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Antoninus) in 86 in a distinguished Roman family. He played a leading political role under Hadrian, was consul in 120 and governor of the province of Asia in 135–6. He was, rather unexpectedly, adopted by Hadrian as his successor in 138 (at age 52), following the death earlier that year of Hadrian's first choice as heir, Lucius Ceionius Commodus. Antoninus was required at the same time to adopt both Marcus (then 17) and Commodus' son Lucius Verus (then 8). Antoninus was already Marcus' uncle by marriage; on his adoption, Antoninus also engaged his daughter Faustina to Marcus (they married in 145). In this way and others, Antoninus marked Marcus, rather than Lucius Verus, as his intended successor. Antoninus was probably viewed by Hadrian as a caretaker emperor, to pave the way for Marcus; in the event he ruled for twenty-three years (until 161), and Marcus had a long period of preparation for the imperial role. Antoninus' rule was generally peaceful, without major wars in the Empire, and was marked by good relations with the senatorial class.

   This chapter is the longest in Book 1, and forms the climax to the series of exemplary character sketches in the book (especially **1.8–1.9, 1.14–1.15**). To make sense of its function and content, it is useful to refer to the shorter version in **6.30**, which seems likely to have been the prototype for **1.16** and which, along with **6.48**, may have given Marcus the idea of writing Book 1 at all (See Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 6–7). In **6.30**, Marcus begins with this self-directed advice 'Take care you are not turned into a Caesar' (that is, a tyrannical emperor), and then summarizes the qualities needed to avoid doing so: 'keep yourself simple, good, sincere, dignified, unpretentious, a friend of justice, reverential towards the gods, kind, affectionate, and vigorous in doing what is fitting' (**6.30.1**). With a view to achieving this aim, he tells himself, in all things, to 'act as a pupil of Antoninus: his energy for actions done in line with reason, his evenness of temper in all situations, his piety, the serenity of his expression, the sweetness of his character, the absence of vacuous pride, the ambition to understand situations' (**6.30.5**).

These and other qualities are then illustrated with very brief descriptions of Antoninus' typical patterns of action.

In **1.16**, as elsewhere in Book 1, the aim is to articulate the qualities Marcus came to understand better through knowing the person concerned. However, there is no separate listing of virtues as there is in **6.30**. Marcus embeds the qualities in the overall account, or indicates them by the thumbnail sketches of Antoninus' pattern of behaviour. Marcus retains the standard format in Book 1, *to* plus adjective or infinitive ('[I learnt] such-and such a quality or way of doing things from *x*', compare Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 1–2). But this is supplemented, more than in other chapters, with additional clauses and varied constructions, especially in **1.16.26– 1.16.30**, to give a fuller picture of Antoninus' mode of living. As regards the content of the chapter, in most respects this matches the features listed in **6.30**. In bare outline, these are: decisiveness and energy (**6.30.5** and **1.16.1**), absence of empty pride (**6.30.5** and **1.16.2**), scrupulous examination of matters (**6.30.6** and **1.16.9**), patience with undeserved criticism (**6.30.7** and **1.16.14**), lack of haste (**6.30.7** and **1.16.29**), avoidance of belittling behaviour (**6.30.8** and **1.16.18**). Further common themes are: not being a sophist (**6.30.9** and **1.16.17**), domestic simplicity (**6.30.9** and **1.16.26**), industriousness (**6.30.10** and **1.16.3**), a healthy lifestyle (**6.30.11** and **1.6.20**), consistency in friendships (**6.30.12** and **1.16.8, 10**), readiness to accept good advice for the public good (**6.30.13** and **1.16.4**), piety without superstition (**6.30.13** and **1.16.15**). **1.16** also adds certain features not found in **6.30**: rigorous administration of justice (**1.16.5, 1.16.8, 1.16.14**); calmness or equanimity (**1.16.12, 1.16.29**), economy in public expenditure and avoidance of private luxury (**1.16.14, 1.16.25–1.16.26**), and, in general, a self-reliant, serious-minded, independent attitude (**1.16.2, 1.16.15, 1.16.17, 1.16.22**) (see Hadot and Luna 1998: clxxx–clxxxi).

How does this catalogue of virtues relate to previous literary patterns? Scholars have highlighted parallels with kingship orations or imperial eulogies, such as that of the emperor Trajan by Pliny. However, Marcus' version, by contrast, is marked by brevity, artlessness, and obvious sincerity in its admiration for Antonius (Rutherford 1989: 114–15, Hadot and Luna 1998: clxxxiii). As in such orations, and in historiographical character sketches of political leaders, an implicit principle of selection is differentiation from other emperors, notably Antoninus' predecessor, Hadrian (Rutherford 1989: 108–10, 113–14). The relationship to Plutarchean biography, and the kind of exemplary presentation we find there (compare Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 17–23) is more subtle and difficult to pinpoint exactly. Plutarch accentuates seemingly trivial features

such as a chance remark or joke, and suggests that these may be more revealing of ethical character than great military exploits (*Alex* 1, cited in comparison with **1.16** by Rutherford 1989: 110). None the less, Plutarch does mostly focus on features of character which are significant because they shed light on the way his subjects act in major military or political crises. His anecdotes bring out the dispositional features which explain why a given person acted in a given way in the military or political arena; and those large-scale, public actions form the main subject matter of Plutarch's biographies.

In **1.16**, we do not find quite that kind of approach. Marcus lists admirable features which manifest themselves in Antoninus' public or private life or both. But there is no clear indication that the description of the mode of private life is significant only or primarily because it discloses character traits which underpin major public acts. Marcus moves easily and unsystematically between public and domestic spheres with no sign that the former are more important. This fact is the more striking because, by contrast with the other exemplary figures in Book 1, Antoninus was paradigmatic for Marcus of how to behave as an emperor; this is explicit in **6.30** and implied in **1.16**. Various factors seem to explain this feature of **1.16**. One is that Antoninus' conduct in private life showed what Romans called *civilitas* (readiness to act as a citizen); as Marcus himself puts it, Antoninus restricted himself to 'something very close to the style of a private citizen' (**1.17.5**), and this formed an important part of what was exemplary about Antoninus. Also, Marcus brings out in this way the consistency (*homologia* or *constantia*), in judgement and character which Stoicism presents as being, in essence, what constitutes virtue and the happiness that depends on this (e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 3.21, Sen. *Ep.* **92.3**). By showing that each dimension of Antoninus' mode of life expressed similar qualities, Marcus underlines the range and depth of this consistency. Perhaps relevant too is the fact that Stoicism, even more than other ancient ethical theories, stressed the centrality of moral intention and of the kind of ethical character that is expressed in each thought, emotion and action, regardless of whether this issues in other-benefiting outcomes, including public ones (LS 61, 63, compare Annas 1993: 426–35). At all events, this feature of **1.16** marks a difference even from the kind of character-centred, ethical exemplarity we find in Plutarch.

Is there any underlying structure in what seems, on the face of it, a rather random listing of admirable features in **1.16**? We can perhaps discern a sequence of related themes, though each embraces a set of different topics: (1) special qualities of mind or understanding (**1.16.1–1.16.9**); (2) thoughtfulness in the management of public life (**1.16.12–1.16.15**);

(3) self-sufficiency in life-style and independence of mind, but not arro-
gance, in dealing with intellectuals or experts (**1.16.16–1.16.21**); (4) stability,
calmness, emotional balance in all aspects of life (**1.16.22–1.16.31**). This,
rather broad or loose, structure can be seen as conveying the point just
made, that Marcus aims to show a character that embodies consistency in
the various spheres of life, without giving special priority to any one sector.
There is no clear attempt, on Marcus' part, for instance, to define
Antoninus' features in terms of the four cardinal virtues recognized by
Stoic theory or the subdivisions sometimes drawn between them (LS 61
B–C, H). In any case, we need to bear in mind the point also made in
connection with **1.15**. Although some of the chapters of Book 1 have the feel
of character-sketches (like Aristotle's picture of the magnanimous person,
EN 4.3), it is not Marcus' overall aim to define a character or to chart the
psychological structure of developmental background underlying this
character. Marcus' aim is, rather, to specify the good features that he feels
he has learnt or understood by contact with the other person. So it is the
character and understanding of Marcus that matters above all, not that of
Antoninus, significant and influential though this was for Marcus.

   The nature of Marcus' focus helps to explain one further general feature
of **1.16**, which also comes out in **6.30**, that is, the presentation of philosophy.
As noted earlier (Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 11–12), although Marcus
makes it clear that Antoninus was not personally involved with philosophy,
he also suggests that Antoninus was able to detect those who are 'truly'
philosophers and that he acted with an emotional stability and consistency
similar to that of Socrates (**1.16.18**, **1.16.30–1.16.31**). In Marcus' case,
however, as is indicated by the whole organization of Book 1, philosophy was
a crucial informing influence, which helped to shape his recognition of the
qualities seen in figures such as Antoninus. Hence, in **6.30**, he sees no incom-
patibility between remaining 'the kind of person that philosophy wanted to
make you' and acting in all things 'as a pupil of Antoninus' (see Gill 2012b:
45–52). Stoic philosophy provided a framework for understanding the
overall objectives and principles of his life, including a specific way of
conceiving ethical development. Antoninus, especially, but alongside other
figures, helped him to see what it meant, in terms of practical, day-to-day
living, to achieve the expression of the virtues that he takes as his overall
goal. So philosophy enables Marcus to attach a significance to Antoninus'
qualities that goes beyond what Antoninus would have recognized, but
without in any way taking away from the worth of his adoptive father's char-
acter and mode of life. This is the standpoint which, I think, underlies the
range and organization of topics in **1.16**, though it is an implicit one.

1.16.1 'to hold immovably to judgements made after full examination (*exētasmenōn*)'; also **1.16.9**: 'a readiness to make precise enquiries (*zētētikon*) . . . so that you could not say, "he gave up the enquiry, satisfied with first impressions (*procheirois phantasiais*)". Compare **6.30.5–6.30.6**: 'the ambition to understand situations (*katalēpsin*) . . . he let nothing pass without examining it carefully and coming to a clear understanding (*noēsai*)', and **6.30.8**: 'how acute he was in examining (*exetastēs*) . . .' In describing Antoninus' qualities of mind, Marcus seems deliberately to use vocabulary with philosophical connotations, such as Socratic enquiry (*zēteō* or *exetazō*) or the Stoic idea of 'examining impressions' with the aim of reaching secure knowledge (compare Epict. *Ench.* 1, *Diss.* 3.2.1–3.2.2). See further Giavatto 2008: 76–83, linking Marcus' use of this kind of vocabulary, also in **1.9.8** and elsewhere in *Med.*, with the Stoic idea of 'dialectical virtue' (D. L. 7.46–7.48 = LS 31 B), i.e. the intellectual qualities characteristic of the normative Stoic wise person. Here, especially, we can see Marcus characterizing Antoninus' qualities in philosophical terms which would not have made much sense to Antoninus himself, but which contribute to Marcus' ongoing project of ethical and intellectual self-development.

1.16.7 'his having made an end of love-affairs with boys' (compare **1.17.4**, **1.17.13**). Here, as in a number of other points in **1.16**, Marcus seems to draw a pointed contrast with Hadrian, whose love affairs, with the young Bithynian Antinous and others, were notorious. Other comments of this kind, marking a difference from well-known features of Hadrian's reign, include: (**1.16.10**) 'his being loyal to his friends'; (**1.16.17**) 'sophist' (*sophistēs*), used negatively to imply 'rhetorical showman', (**1.16.21**); readiness to give way without jealousy to those who had a special competence in, for instance, expressiveness of language'; (**1.16.22**): 'inclined to stay in the same places or practices'; **1.16.26**) 'nor was he over-fond of building . . . nor did he give special attention . . . to the beauty of people's bodies' (compare **1.16.7**). See also Rutherford 1989: 108–9, Hadot and Luna 1998: clxxxii. The cumulative effect of such implicit contrasts is to confirm the impression of Antoninus as a person of stability of character and way of life, and freedom from the superficiality or showmanship for which Hadrian had been criticized.

1.16.8 'consideration for people's feelings' (*koinonoēmosunē*), a term which occurs only here in Greek and may have been coined by Marcus. 'not requiring his friends'; the 'friends' of an emperor were, for the most part, not just social companions but political advisers and assistants, expected to

be constantly available; they formed the membership of the 'council' referred to in **1.16.9**.

1.16.13 'check on public applause'; **1.6.14** 'stewardship of its resources'; **1.16.15** 'humouring the mob' (e.g. in the amphitheatre); these are all features of Antoninus' rule confirmed by other sources, which Marcus also adopted as far as possible (see Farquharson 1944: 469–71). This reinforces the general picture of Antoninus' independence of mind and freedom from showmanship stressed in other areas (see note on **1.16.7**; and **1.16.15**).

1.16.15 'freedom from superstitious fears'; for this point, compare **6.30.14**, also **1.6.2** (Diognetus). It is unclear what forms of superstition Marcus has in mind. In general, Antoninus and Marcus, as emperors, both observed religious rituals in a highly traditional way (see 'doing everything in line with tradition' (**1.16.21**); see also Hadot and Luna 1998: clxiv–clxv.

1.16.17 'sophist' (*sophistēs*) (implying 'rhetorical showman'), obsequiously servile (*oueraklos*), or a pedant (*scholastikos*)'. As noted earlier (note to **1.16.7**), the first term may mark a distinction from Hadrian; the second may signal a contrast with Claudius (see further Rutherford 1989: 109); the second term, found nowhere else, seems to take its connotations from *verna* 'domestic slave'.

1.16.18 'he respected genuine philosophers'; Antoninus is recorded as having criticized what he saw as vanity or self-importance by public intellectuals, including Alexander the Platonist (**1.12**) and Apollonius of Chalcedon (**1.8**); see Philostr. *VS* 2.5: 570–1 and *HA, Vita Pii* 10.4 (also Rutherford 1989: 82–3). Those considered genuine philosophers were granted tax exemptions or other privileges, so it was important for Antoninus to be able to determine who met this criterion.

1.16.25 'moderation in providing public shows . . . distributions'. The 'distributions' were public donations to the Roman people of money or foodstuffs (wine, oil, and wheat). *HA Vita Pii* 8.1–8.14, records lists of Antoninus' public acts of this kind, which were relatively modest compared to those of Hadrian (see also notes on **1.16.7**, **1.16.13**).

1.16.26 'not one to take baths at unusual times'. There may be a pointed contrast with Caligula (Rutherford 1989: 109). The inclusion of such trivial details (compare **6.30.11**: 'because of his frugal diet not needing to relieve

himself except at the usual time'), may be a reminder of the long period (twenty-three years) Marcus spent as a member of Antoninus' household. It also reflects the point made earlier (general comment on **1.16**) that, for Stoicism, and to some extent ancient ethical theory in general, all aspects of a person's life were taken to express his or her virtue or defectiveness and were thus of ethical significance.

1.16.27 'the fact that his clothes were brought up from the villa down at Lorium'. Here I do not follow the emendation of the text (*stolē*, 'clothing', to *stoa*, 'colonnade') proposed by Theiler and adopted by Hadot and Luna. On either reading, the remark is designed, like the preceding comments, to show Antoninus' economical lifestyle. On my reading (see further Farquharson 1944: 476), Antoninus showed this by having his clothes made and sent up to Rome from one of his family villas (in Lorium, twenty kilometres west of Rome). On the Theiler/Hadot reading, Antoninus constructs a new colonnade on top of an existing villa rather than building a new palace entirely. 'Most of his way of life at Lanuvium'; this phrase, presumably, commends the unpretentious way of life (as far as this was possible for an emperor, compare **1.17.5, 6.30.9**) at another family house, where Antoninus was born.

1.16.28 'how he treated the tax-collector at Tusculum who apologized'. We have no other report of this event, which seems to illustrate the next point made (**1.16.29**), the fact that Antoninus 'was neither harsh nor implacable'.

1.16.29–1.16.31 'calm, orderly way . . . what is reported of Socrates . . . well-balanced and indomitable character'. The conclusion seems designed to draw a general picture of the kind of character Antoninus had, the value of which he communicated to Marcus. As in the case of Maximus (**1.15**), Marcus suggests that an exceptionally well-balanced character under-pinned Antoninus' behaviour in a range of areas, enabling him to maintain independence of mind and emotional balance whatever the circumstances (see also notes on **1.16.7, 1.16.13, 1.16.26**). Marcus also sums up how he understands Antoninus in relation to philosophical norms and exemplars. Antoninus showed the same kind of independence as regards bodily pleasures or their absence as Socrates did (compare Pl. *Smp.* 176c, 219e–220c, Xen. *Mem.* 1.3.14). He is also described as 'indomitable' (*aēttētos*), a favourite Stoic term for emotional invulnerability (e.g. Stob. 2.99.19, part of *SVF* 1.216, on the wise person, Epict. *Diss.* 1.18.21, 3.6.5–3.6.7, see further Hadot and Luna 1998: 46). The latter feature is linked with his (presumably,

self-restrained) response to the illness and death of Maximus; the closeness of Maximus to the imperial family is indicated also by his inclusion with family members in the list of those who have died in **8.25.1**. One implication is that Antoninus acquired, without the support of philosophy, the kind of emotional stability attributed to the Stoic wise person and Socrates, who often served as an exemplar for the Stoic wise person. Another suggestion, more central to the focus of Book 1, is that Antoninus provided for Marcus lived experience of qualities evoking the 'passion-free' virtue that Stoic philosophy presents as the ideal to work towards. On Marcus' thinking on the relationship between Stoic theory and real-life influences in ethical development, compare general note on **1.16**, final para., and Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 10–13, 29–32.

1.17 The final chapter in Book 1 is different from the others, in that Marcus considers what he owes to the gods, rather than specific people who were important in his life. This move raises two questions. One is how far this chapter continues the line of thought in Book 1 as a whole or introduces a new approach. Another is whether, in considering the benefits given by the gods Marcus does so from a traditional Roman standpoint or from a more philosophical, and specifically Stoic, perspective.

On the first question, it is clear that Marcus has in view much the same framework as is present in Book 1 as a whole. He uses a verbal format that is largely the same as he does elsewhere; he uses noun clauses (*to* plus infinitive, 'that this or that happened'), although he does not use adjectives to specify the personal qualities he was helped to appreciate. He is also still concerned to identify factors that promoted his own ethical development and understanding; for instance, in **1.17.11**, he cites the idea of living according to nature as one of the things he has learnt (compare **1.9.2**). However, there is a subtle, but significant, difference in the factors he identifies here. Whereas elsewhere he notes that specific people expressed qualities in their character or way of life whose value he recognized, here he identifies background factors which enabled him to develop ethically in the way he did. The focus, thus, is two-fold: on the background factors and on the ethical use that Marcus made of these factors.

For instance, in **1.17.1–1.17.12**, Marcus attributes to the gods the fact that he was surrounded by family members and friends who were good people (*agathoi*), almost without exception, as already indicated in the previous chapters. But he goes on to say that he 'did not blunder into offending any of them', although he was naturally capable of this. He adds that 'by the favour of the gods, no combination of circumstances arose which would

have put me to the test'. Here at least, the gods are seen as providing the background factors, the family and friends or the 'combination of circumstances' in which Marcus lived his life. But the fact that Marcus responded in a way that promoted his ethical development (that he did not 'blunder into offending' his relatives) is attributed to Marcus himself as agent, at least by implication. At one point (1.17.11), he seems to suggest that the gods have played a more active role in his development (by 'their external influences, assistance, and their purposes'), though here too he signals that he needs to respond to these 'reminders and . . . teachings' for them to have their full effect. Towards the end of the chapter (1.17.20–1.17.21), he refers to a different kind of divine benefit: 'remedies given to me through dreams' for health-care, and also a 'kind of (*hōsper*) oracle'. However, along with some other points that have no explicit ethical content (e.g. in 1.17.18–1.17.19), this could be seen as one of a number of background factors that enabled Marcus, as a rational agent, to carry out the kind of life-long programme of ethical self-development implied in the chapter and in Book I as a whole. The final item (1.17.22) refers back to the role of philosophy in his development, and the idea that this should be focused primarily on ethical improvement, and not on technical aspects pursued for their own sake. But whereas 1.7.1–1.7.3 attributes to Rusticus a decisive role in gaining that insight, this passage ascribes to the 'help and luck of the gods' (1.17.23) the fact that Marcus did not 'fall in with any rhetoricians' or apply himself to these non-ethical activities. In general, as noted later, the organization of topics and the underlying rationale are less clear in 1.17.12–1.17.23 than in the first part (1.17.1–1.17.11), suggesting that the latter part is less fully worked out.

In giving this role to the gods in his ethical development, is Marcus operating within a traditional Roman religious thought-world or the more philosophically shaped framework of thinking about gods that he assumes elsewhere in the *Meditations*? (On this framework, see Rutherford 1989: ch. 5, van Ackeren 2011: 444–74.) This is not a very easy question to answer, particularly as the Stoics claimed that their theology was compatible with conventional religion. More precisely, they presented their theology as offering a more systematic and theorized account of beliefs and practices found in different human societies, including Greek and Roman culture. (See D. L. 7.147, Cic. *ND* 2.12–2.15 (=LS 54 A, C), see further Algra 2009). For instance, they attempted to provide a philosophical rationalization for the widespread ancient practice of divination (LS 55 O, P). This general feature of Stoic thinking is presupposed by Epictetus, whose discourses were very influential on Marcus. In one passage, Epictetus says that our

hymns to god should take the form of offering praise for enabling human beings, as rational animals, to understand the divine providentiality of the universe (*Diss.* 1.16.18–1.16.21). Marcus also explores the idea that religious practices such as prayer should reflect ethical ideas consistent with Stoic thinking. For instance, Marcus says that you should not pray to the gods to be enabled to sleep with a woman (who is not your wife), but that you should pray not to want to do so. (See **9.40.5–9.40.7**, compare Sen. *Ep.* 42.1– 42.12, also Rutherford 1989: 220–5). Similarly, in **1.17**, Marcus presents the gods either as providing the background factors which enabled him to develop ethically or—more tentatively—as providing 'reminders and, one might say, teachings' which he could use for this purpose (**1.17.11**). Thus, in **1.17**, the gods emerge as partners, in a sense, in promoting Marcus' development, even though this development still remains, very much 'up to him' (in Epictetus' terms, *Ench.* 1).

1.17 as a whole seems to imply that the gods exercise a providential care that is in some sense personal or individual to Marcus. Is this assumption compatible with Stoic thinking about divine providentiality? In fact, on this topic, as on others, we can see evidence of a range of possible positions and continuing debate among Stoics (see LS 62). In his résumé of Stoic theology, Cicero at one point claims that divine providential care is not limited to the workings of the universe as a whole but extends to nations, groups, and even individuals, citing some of the great exemplary figures of the Roman past (*ND* 2.164–2.167). Cicero does not argue the point fully, and one might be inclined to see this as an intrusion of more traditionally Roman thinking about divine favour for specific states and individuals (compare Cic. *ND* 3.5). However, the idea does also appear in the lengthy critique of Stoic ideas in *ND* 3.66–3.93, suggesting that it formed part of standard Stoic theory. Also, Dorothea Frede suggests that this idea could have been developed by Cicero in a way that is compatible with Stoic thinking about causation, provided one takes account of notions such as the unique identity (*idiōs poion*) that any given person has. Broadly speaking, the idea would be that universal causal determinism (seen as implying divine providentiality) works out in any given case in a way that reflects particular factors, including that of unique identity, as well as general ones (Frede 2002: 109–15, compare LS 28 G–J; also Bénatouïl 2009: 36–44.) For **1.17**, a different, but not incompatible, set of ideas, may be more relevant. It is an integral part of Stoic thought that all human beings are constitutively capable of ethical development towards virtue, and that human rationality of this kind is an expression of divine providentiality (LS 61 K–L, 54 H, N, 63 E). The working out of this process, in any given case, involves a whole

set of particular factors, including the background against which someone develops and the specific way they choose to respond to these factors. We can ascribe either the background factors or the ethical response or both to the work of the gods or divine providentiality. But, in line with Stoic thinking about 'compatibilism', this does not detract from the agency and responsibility of the person concerned (LS 62 C, compare Bobzien 1998: ch. 6). It is difficult to determine, from the brief indications in 1.17 of Marcus' underlying ideas, whether he has such a framework of ideas in mind here. But we can at any rate suggest that Marcus could have supposed that the gods contributed in these two forms to his ethical development, in a way that is compatible with the Stoic-influenced ideas about divine providentiality and ethical development that he mostly presupposes in the *Meditations*.

As regards the organization of themes, the first two thirds of the chapter (1.17.1–1.17.11) seems to have a fairly coherent structure, whereas the last third (1.17.13–1.17.23) is more miscellaneous, with only lateral links between topics. Up to 1.17.11, the chapter has a broadly chronological shape, and provides a kind of reprise of the first 16 chapters, but from a different standpoint. Marcus reviews his family, adolescence, and his life in his father's household following his adoption (1.17.1–1.17.5); then his relationship with his brother, Lucius Verus, who was also co-emperor during 161–9; also the children born to him and his wife (probably during 149–170, see further Hadot and Luna 1998: cxxviii–cxxix, 1.17.6–1.17.7). Attention then shifts to Marcus' education and his teachers, three of whom (Apollonius, Rusticus, and Maximus) were crucial in helping to ensure that his primary focus was on Stoic philosophy (1.17.10). This leads naturally to Marcus' understanding of 'the life according to nature' (the Stoic account of the goal of human life), which is also linked with divine guidance and Marcus' response to this guidance and which forms a kind of logical closure, or at least pause (1.17.11). The final group (1.17.12–1.17.22), perhaps composed at a different time, has a more random character. Physical health and sexual desire, and the passion of anger, are themes that have some interconnection (1.17.12–1.17.14, 1.17.20). We can also see links between the references to mother, wife, and tutors for children (1.17.16, 1.17.18–1.17.19). The final point (not being distracted by technicalities from attending to the ethical core of philosophy, 1.17.22, recalling 1.7.1–1.7.3), seems designed to bring about a second closure, given the importance of this point for the *Meditations* as a whole (of which Book 1 seems to be a kind of offshoot). But it follows less naturally from what precedes than does the earlier climactic passage (1.17.11). Possibly for similar reasons, the underlying rationale of

the relationship between the contributions of the gods and human agency is less clear in the last third than in the first two-thirds.

1.17.2 'despite having the sort of disposition (*diathesis*)'. This can perhaps be linked with the comment in **1.17.14**, that, though often angry with Rusticus, he controlled this. But, if Marcus was naturally inclined to anger, there is little evidence in *Med.* or elsewhere to suggest this. These two passages, along with some comments on his intellectual limitations (e.g. **7.67**, **8.1**), are among the very few which aim to specify Marcus' natural (though not necessarily innate) qualities. As suggested earlier, this marks a contrast from the Platonic-Aristotelian pattern of thinking about development, centred on the idea that this arises out of the combination of innate nature, habituative upbringing, and intellectual education, a pattern prominent in Plutarch and Galen. Marcus seems to presuppose the more purely rational, Stoic way of thinking about ethical development (see Introd., text to nn. 80–2, and Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 29–32).

1.17.3–1.17.4 'I was not brought up any longer than I was by my grandfather's partner . . . that I kept the flower of my innocence'. After his father's death, Marcus lived with his grandfather (see note on **1.1**), who, after his wife's death, had taken a woman as partner (*pallakē*) or live-in mistress. This was not unusual; we are told that Marcus did the same after his wife's death (*HA, Vita Marci* 29.10). But Marcus suggests that she was not a good influence, perhaps because she promoted a rather lax sexual ethos (if we take into account the following comment). Note also **1.17.13**: 'that I never touched Benedicta and Theodotus', presumably a female and male household slave (we do not know quite which household) with whom it would have been regarded as acceptable for him to have sex. Marcus moved from his grandfather's house to his adoptive father's at 17 and married in 145 (age 34). His comments suggest he was a virgin until marriage or at least throughout his adolescence, though he become the father of a large number of children with his wife Faustina (note on **1.17.7**).

1.17.5 'that I was placed under a ruler and father'. Marcus refers to his adoption by Antoninus (at age 17) with whom he spent the next twenty-three years; see **1.16** and notes.

'or any other such trappings of pomp'. Compare **1.16.26–1.16.7**, **6.30.9**. My translation follows the emendation in Farquharson 1944: 481 fn. 16, moving

kai ('and' but here translated as 'or') before *toiōnde tinōn* ('other such'), rather than the text in Hadot and Luna 1998.

1.17.6 'that I had the kind of brother'. Lucius Verus (also called Aelius Aurelius Commodus) was born in 130 as son of Lucius Ceionius Commodus, who was named as Hadrian's successor in 136 but died in 138. Antoninus, on his adoption in 138, was required to adopt both Marcus and Lucius Verus. Although Antoninus made it clear he regarded Marcus rather than Lucius as his intended successor, Marcus made Lucius co-emperor on his accession in 161, although Marcus remained the more senior and authoritative figure. Lucius directed a successful military campaign against the Parthians in 162–6 (compare Birley 2012c: 155–65). He died of a stroke in 169.

'by his character . . . heartened me by his respect and affection'. Historical sources for the period (esp. *HA*), tend to give a rather negative picture of Lucius, presenting him as self-indulgent and frivolous, by contrast with Marcus' hard-working and austere character. But these writings, and Fronto's letters, also bring out more favourable features in Lucius, especially an open, warm, and generous nature, as well as confirming the impression given here of good relations between the two (adoptive) brothers and co-emperors (see further Hadot and Luna 1998: cxix–cxxvii). Marcus' comments here might seem rather guarded: the focus is on the effect of Lucius' character on Marcus and on Lucius' respect and affection for the older brother, not on Lucius' own character or on Marcus' affection for Lucius. But this emphasis fits in with the overall programme of **1.17** (at least up to **1.17.11**), which presents the favourable background factors for Marcus' ethical development.

1.17.7 'that my children were born'. Marcus and his wife Faustina had thirteen or fourteen children (between 147 and 170), of whom about half died in infancy or early childhood. Marcus' comment may seem rather cold; but his attention here is on the external factors of his life (what the gods provided); in **1.13.3**, he cites 'genuine love (*alēthōs agapētikon*) for children' as a valuable lesson he learned from Catulus.

1.17.8 'that I did not make more progress in oratory, poetry'. In fact, it is clear from the letters with Fronto, especially in the period 139–145, that Marcus did make excellent progress in composing in prose and verse. But, at least from about 145 onwards, he placed more weight on education in philosophy, as support for his expanding political role (see notes on **1.7**).

1.17.9 'I was quick to promote my tutors'. Under Antoninus (but probably with Marcus' prompting), Maximus was made consul in 142, Fronto in 143, and Severus in 146; Rusticus was consul for the second time (under Marcus) in 162, and prefect of the city in 160–7.

1.17.10 'that I came to know Apollonius, Rusticus, and Maximus'. Compare notes on **1.7–1.8, 1.15**; all of them were crucial influences in Marcus' deepening understanding of Stoic philosophy.

1.17.11 'a life according to nature so that, as regards the gods'. On Marcus' presentation of the gods as (along with the people just named) influences in enabling him to understand the meaning of the Stoic *telos* (goal of life, compare LS 63 A–C), see general note on **1.17**. Marcus uses various terms for the relevant divine communication: 'external influences' (*diadoseis*), 'assistance' (*sullēpseis*), 'purposes or 'thoughts' (*epinoiai*), sometimes emended to 'inspiration' (see Hadot and Luna 1998: notes complémentaires: 51–2 fn. 22), also 'reminders' and teachings'. This language is quite generalized, and does not obviously evoke standard religious forms of divine communication such as oracles or divination. Marcus may have in mind features normally taken to show divine providentiality in Stoicism (e.g. the orderly movement of the stars, or the cycle of the seasons, LS 54 C, L). However, if he has in mind more strictly religious communication, this is consistent with the allusion to the Stoic goal of life, since Stoics saw their theology as compatible with conventional religion (LS 54 A, C). On the language for divine communication used here, see also Rutherford 1989: 192–5, van Ackeren 2011: 459–60.

As commented earlier (general note to **1.17**, last paragraph), the last third of the chapter (**1.17.12–1.17.23**) is more miscellaneous and reads as loosely connected notes.

1.17.18 'that my wife is as she is'. Anna Galeria Faustina was born around 130, as the daughter of Antoninus, was engaged to Marcus following his adoption in 138, and married in 145; on their many children, see note on **1.17.17**. She accompanied Marcus on his Danube campaigns (168), earning the title *Mater Castrorum*, 'Mother of the Camp'. Although she was rumoured to have been unfaithful to Marcus, and to have supported Avidius Crassus in his revolt against Marcus in 175 (shortly before her death in that year), the comment here gives no hint of that. The term 'affectionate' (*philostorgon*) was especially linked in Stoicism with the idea of parental love (compare note on **1.13.3**).

1.17.20 'remedies . . . through dreams . . . at Caieta I had a kind of oracle'. Here, by contrast with **1.17.11**, Marcus specifies more conventional religious means of communication, though we know nothing more of the 'kind of' (*hōsper*) oracle at Caieta. Here too, by contrast with **1.17.11**, the gods confer external benefits (Stoic 'preferred indifferents' such as health) rather than promoting development towards understanding the goal of life. Marcus does acknowledge elsewhere that gods may confer such benefits (**9.11**, **9.27**); but his comments there imply (Stoic-style) distancing of himself from those whose desires are limited to such things (see further Rutherford 1989: 200–5). This may be another indication that this part of the chapter (**1.17.12–1.17.23**) is less fully thought out than **1.17.1–1.17.11**.

1.17.22 'to pore over books'. Here I follow the relatively small emendation adopted by Farquharson 1944: 486, reading *epi tou sungraphas* rather than the more substantial emendation (*to topous sungraphein*, meaning 'write commonplaces' or 'standard topics') adopted by Hadot and Luna 1998: notes complémentaires, 55 fn. 20). I think what Marcus is disowning here is the concentration on philosophical texts, such as those of Chrysippus, rather than on their content, especially their ethical significance, which Epictetus also criticizes (e.g. *Diss.* 1.4.3–1.4.10, see further Long 2002: 45–6). The rest of the sentence refers to study of logic ('analyse syllogisms', i.e. work out moves in formal logic), and physics ('celestial phenomena'). The conclusion of the chapter thus evokes the theme, also signalled in **1.7.1–1.7.3**, and implied throughout **1.7–1.9**, **1.13–1.15**, that the overriding aim of studying philosophy is to promote ethical improvement rather than technical expertise (compare Introd., text to n. 17).

1.17.23 'help of the gods and good luck'. Although the phrase seems rather un-philosophical (surely divine providentiality is different from mere luck?) and has sometimes been thought to be a tragic quotation, Marcus does use similar formulations elsewhere (e.g. **3.11.4**), so he may not sense the tension.

Book 2

Preliminary Note: Commenting on Books 2–6

Providing an effective commentary on the *Meditations* (leaving aside the exceptional Book 1) poses special challenges for reasons indicated earlier (Introd., text to nn. 1–17). The work seems to be a notebook made up of separate and loosely connected philosophical reflections; although there is a clear, if implicit, allegiance to Stoicism, there are some exceptional features, and there is scope for debate about how firmly his thoughts are meant to fit in with standard Stoic teachings. There has been little previous detailed commentary on the work. Farquharson, as part of his two-volume edition of *Med.* (1944), included a short overview of each entry (or 'chapter') in vol. 1, to accompany his text and translation, and much fuller notes, with close references to the Greek terminology, in vol. 2. Farquharson's linguistic notes remain valuable, and he also cites useful parallels to ancient philosophical texts. However, his edition antedated the intensive study and analysis of Stoic philosophy of recent decades and his interpretative style is remote from current scholarly approaches. Recent translations of *Med.* for Penguin Classics (Hammond and Clay 2006) and for Wordsworth and World's Classics (Hard and Gill 1997, 2011) have provided short notes on most chapters, centred (especially in the Hard and Gill volumes) on links between *Med.* and Stoic thought in general. Recent interpretative studies of the work have included valuable comments on many chapters, treated as illustrating the theme or topic under discussion at any one time (see esp. Rutherford 1989, Hadot 1998, Giavatto 2008, and van Ackeren 2011).

Here, the comments offered have a two-fold aim. On the one hand, I have attempted to locate each chapter in the context of the kind of thinking found in *Med.* as a whole. In the Introduction, I provided a broad analysis of the framework of ideas found in *Med.*, referring especially to four interrelated strands. I also argued there that, in spite of some seemingly non-standard

features, the work is consistently and strongly informed by Stoic ideas of the kind we find elsewhere, though conceived and presented in a distinctive way. The notes refer back, where appropriate, to relevant parts of the Introduction, and also highlight other sources for Stoic thought which bear on the chapter under discussion. On the other hand, I have also tried, especially in the longer chapters, to bring out the underlying rationale of the sequence of ideas and the interconnection of themes found in each passage. This has not been much attempted by previous studies; but it seems to me an important dimension of reading *Med.*, and one that could be taken further than I have scope to do here. The main focus, in line with the purpose of the volume as a whole, is on philosophical content and themes, as these emerge in the translations provided. I have included some comments on verbal style or Greek terminology, but only when this seemed crucial for making sense of the thought of the chapter. Comments on the Greek text are largely confined to departures from the readings adopted by Dalfen 1987 (see 'Note on the Text and Translation'). In line with this two-fold aim, the notes to Books 2–6 take the form of discursive comment on each chapter, incorporating exegesis of specific phrases, by contrast with Book 1, where I have mostly separated general comment on a given chapter and exegesis of specific phrases. Similar themes, with variations, occur in many chapters; I have highlighted some parallels within the notes, but not tried to cite all parallels in each case. See also the 'List of Main Themes' at the end of the volume, which, together with the General Index, should enable readers to track recurrent themes in *Med.*

'Written among the Quadi on the River Gran'. This heading was placed at the start of this book (or the end of Book 1); a similar heading is found between Books 2 and 3. These headings indicate that these books (or at least the neighbouring chapters) were written while Marcus was campaigning in Germany. Marcus campaigned from 168 onwards against the Quadi, a German tribe north of the Danube, of which the Gran is a tributary (see further Birley 2012d: 222–7).

2.1 This chapter is the first of Marcus' reflections, if the order of entries in the manuscript matches the order of composition. The first word signals the mode of self-address, specifically self-command, which runs through the *Meditations*. The opening is doubly reflexive, as Marcus tells himself what to say to himself first thing in the morning. He seems to refer to a practice of daily (or nightly) self-examination adopted by Seneca (*Ira* 3.36.1–3.36.3), and by some others, not exclusively Stoics (see Newman 1989, van Ackeren 2011: 260–87); compare **5.1, 10.13**.

The content of Marcus' self-directed advice combines the two main aspects of the Stoic theory of ethical development ('appropriation'), personal and social, and the associated theory of value (LS 57 F and 59 D, 58 A–C). Marcus, while not supposing that he has completed the two aspects of this developmental process, understands it well enough to grasp the profound impact it can have on one's interpersonal relationships. The people Marcus prepares himself to meet have the qualities they have ('meddling', etc.) and the correlated bad emotions (or passions, such as envy) because they have failed to grasp the message conveyed by this process (**2.1.1–2.1.2**). Marcus, by contrast, recognizes the force of the core Stoic ethical claim, that only what is right is good and only what is wrong is bad; it follows that the only 'harm' or bad thing we can experience is the harm we impose on ourselves by doing wrong (**2.1.3**). He also sees the significance of an idea that forms part of the Stoic theory of social appropriation: that all people are essentially members of a single family ('relatives' or 'brothers') or limbs of a single body, in that they share in the rationality that is common to human beings and gods, or as it is put here, 'the same mind and portion of divinity' (**2.1.3–2.1.4**).

Recognizing the force of these ideas alters our attitudes to other people (even if those others do not recognize this force); it leads one away from misguided emotions and uncooperative actions ('resentment and rejection') and towards 'good emotions' and the kind of cooperative action that is 'in accordance with nature' rather than 'contrary to it' (**2.1.5**). On the ideas presupposed here, the Stoic two-fold theory of development and the Stoic theory of bad and good emotions, see Introd., text to nn. 82, 87–90, 107–9, 130–4, and for comparison with Strawson's contrast between 'reactive' and 'objective' attitudes, see Introd., text to nn. 135–9. The claim that one can only harm oneself is a Socratic theme already linked with Stoic thinking about value and interpersonal relations by Epictetus (compare Pl. *Ap.* 30c8–30d9, *Grg.* 466b–466e, with Epict. *Diss.* 1.18, 1.29.1–1.29.29; see also Long 2002: 70–4). For the idea of reason as the distinctively human feature (but one shared with god or gods, **2.1.3**, see e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 76.9–76.10 (=LS 63 D); compare **2.4.2** and **5.27**.

2.2 In **2.1.1**, I do not adopt the deletion of 'this' (*touto*) in Dalfen 1987; I take the phrase to convey 'what makes up this being of mine', i.e. this nature which is mine and which I am now discussing. This is one of a number of chapters in which we find an unusual three-fold subdivision of human nature: (**2.2.1**) 'flesh (*sarkia*) and a bit of breath (*pneumation*) and the ruling centre (*hēgemonikon*)'. Compare **3.16, 5.33, 7.16, 8.56, 12.3, 12.14**. In place of

'breath', we sometimes find *psuchē*, which normally means 'soul' or 'mind' in philosophical Greek but is used in these cases to mean 'breath' or vitality'. We also find other chapters with the more conventional contrast between *psuchē* ('mind' or 'soul') and body (*sōma*) e.g. **6.32**, **10.1**. This kind of formulation is surprising in terms of Stoic theory. A distinctive feature of Stoic psychology is that the 'soul' or 'personality' is physical and is animated, like other objects in the world, by divine 'breath' (*pneuma*). A further distinctive feature is that the 'mind' or 'ruling centre' (*hēgemonikon*), which is also physical, directs all psychological functions including emotions and desires (compare LS 47, 53, 65). It might seem at first as if Marcus is introducing a new (or 'eclectic') psychology, combining Platonic body–soul dualism (or the Platonic tripartite psyche) with Stoic ideas. In 162–166 (while Marcus was writing *Med.*), Galen, a medical writer who was one of Marcus' doctors, was combining the tripartite psychology with a medical, anatomically based, analysis of bodily functions in *PHP* 1–6.

But if Marcus' three-fold psychological sub-division is taken in the context of *Med.* as a whole, and also placed within the main line of thought within this chapter, a different and more plausible reading can be offered. Marcus, like Epictetus in comparable passages (*Diss.* 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 1.20.17–1.20.18, 2.2.19), is using these subdivisions to underline a point which is wholly in line with Stoic theory. This is that we, human beings, are constitutively capable, by our psychological capacities, of exercising rational agency (*prohairesis*, in Epictetus' terms) and using this to direct our attention to key ethical ideas and messages that we can use to direct our lives. Here, Marcus urges himself both to 'despise the flesh' (**2.2.2**) and see the *pneuma* ('breath') as a merely physical process (**2.2.3**) and also to ensure that the 'ruling centre' is not 'enslaved' or 'tugged . . . like a puppet' 'by each unsociable impulse' and accepts its fate (**2.2.4**). The messages he gives to himself: 'put down your books' (**2.2.2**), treat himself as 'on the point of death', and to remember he is 'an old man' (he is about . . . 59) (**2.2.2, 2.2.4**), are probably designed to express the same message in a different way and to add urgency to this self-command.

The themes of this chapter, especially the opening formulation ('What makes up this being of mine'), evoke what we might call 'essentialism', specifically, presenting our rational mind as our 'real' self or essence, a move we find in famous passages in Plato and Aristotle. But, whereas in Plato at least, this move is coupled with substantive metaphysical or epistemological (as well as psychological) claims, in *Med*, as in Epictetus, this is not so. Other passages show that Marcus still presupposes psychophysical and psychological unity or holism (e.g. **5.26**, **10.24**). Indeed, his own

self-commands here assume psychological unity; in urging himself not to be enslaved, he assumes that his rational mind can redirect his impulses or motives in what he sees as the right direction. (See Introd., text to nn. 191–211; also Gill 2006: 96–100, 2007b: 192–200, 2010a: ch. 3, on Galen vis-à-vis Stoic psychology.)

2.3 Marcus here explores one of his favourite themes: the providential nature of the events in the universe. The focus here, as sometimes elsewhere, is on seeing oneself as part of a larger whole, the universe (e.g. **2.9**) and accepting events, which might otherwise seem bad for us, as part of this larger, beneficial, whole (e.g. **4.34**, **5.8**, **12.32**). The specific line of thought developed here starts from the Stoic idea of universal causal determinism, according to which all events form part of a seamless web of causes ('the interweaving and intertwining of things governed by providence'). Hence, what we see as 'works of fortune (or 'luck', *tuchē*) are not separate from nature' as a whole since 'everything flows from there', i.e. from this causal web (**2.3.1**). This causal web is conceived as both predetermined and informed by divine providential rationality and care (*pronoia*); thus, the totality of events is seen as good, and not morally neutral (compare LS 55 J–N; see further Bobzien 1998: 28–33). Marcus assumes the idea of the goodness of the whole nexus of events, and adds that 'what maintains that nature' (that of the causal nexus) is good. Hence it is good for any one part to play its role in maintaining this nexus; this applies not just to the four elements, but also 'compounds' of elements (**2.3.2**), e.g. human beings such as Marcus. So for Marcus to 'change' at the appropriate time, e.g. by dying, though not obviously advantageous for him individually, is good for him as a part of the larger (providentially shaped) causal nexus. Marcus concludes by urging himself to be satisfied by these doctrines; even if the relevant changes seem harmful for him, 'he should not die grumbling on but [accept these changes] positively, genuinely, full-heartedly grateful to the gods' (**2.3.3**).

This line of thought is consistent with ideas found elsewhere in Stoicism (e.g. Epict. 2.6.9, ascribed to Chrysippus = LS 58 J). However, this is only one of a number of Stoic ideas on which Marcus draws in providing a cosmic context for ethics. Another important strand is the idea that for human beings to exercise their ('divine') rationality in living a life according to nature (and virtue) is to play their own part within the whole by realizing the 'guardian spirit' (*daimōn*) within us (compare D. L. 7.88 = LS 63 C(3–4)). This idea is deployed, for instance, in **2.3**, **2.4.2**, and **2.13**. Hadot (1998: chs. 5 and 7) presents the first line of thought (the one expressed in

2.3) as fundamental for the thought of *Med.*, and as crucial for the 'discipline of desire' which he sees as one of three core 'spiritual exercises' practised there. But this probably overstates the importance of this idea, which forms part of a larger complex of Stoic themes about the cosmic context of ethics. On the ethics–physics interface in *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 212–32, and on Hadot's interpretative approach, Introd., text to nn. 56–65.

2.4 Here, and in the next two chapters (and elsewhere, e.g. **2.11.1, 2.14, 17.1**), Marcus stresses the idea that *now* is the time to address the most important questions in human life or tackle the most important tasks. Stoic theory has well-developed ideas about time, including drawing a sharp distinction between the status of the present and that of past and future (LS 51 B–C). But the focus on the urgency of the present, which is also strongly marked in Seneca, probably owes less to these ideas than to the—seemingly paradoxical—thought that what matters *now* is addressing the ultimate questions, those which provide a long-term basis for one's life (and all human lives) as a whole. In particular, Marcus urges himself to recognize the significance of the idea that he (like others) is an 'offshoot' (*aporrhoia*, see **5.27**, 'fragment', *apospasma*) of the 'director' (*dioikountos*) of the universe. What seems to be implied here is our shared human rationality, which is properly expressed in seeking to live a life 'in accordance with nature', which is also a life 'in accordance with virtue' (compare D. L. 7.88 = LS 63 C(3–4)), which also uses the term 'director' or 'administrator' (*dioikētēs*). In other words, Marcus encourages himself to see a cosmic context for his ethical project of self-improvement. Thus, while recognizing the finitude of his life ('there is a limit set to your time'), he sees this as also part of the natural order, and as a reason not for despair but for pressing on with this ethical project.

2.5. This chapter also presses the need for urgency ('carry out each act as if it were the last of you life'), though this is now specified not just as 'now' but as 'at every hour' (**2.5.1, 2.5.2**). The urgency is now focused on 'the task in hand', and on what Marcus needs to do in his specific role 'as a Roman and man'. But what is envisaged is not just achieving practical outcomes; indeed, to do this 'you need to give yourself space from other concerns'. Rather, Marcus' urges himself to treat each situation as a means of taking forward what was described in the Introduction as Marcus' core ethical project, and illustrated by reference to **3.11** (see Introd., text to nn. 78–109, also 119–22, on Marcus' political thinking). In any given situation, Marcus

urges himself to try to express certain virtues and also to avoid passionate and deluded responses. The virtues are dignity (*semnotēs*), affectionate concern for others (*philostorgia*, compare notes on **1.11**, final note, and **1.13.3**), freedom (in a Stoic sense, i.e. freedom from error and passion), and justice. The contrasting responses are randomness and 'passionate (*empathous*) deviation from the rule of reason'. For these ideas about the passions, compare LS 65 A(1–2), G(3)) as well as other defective reactions, including 'dissatisfaction with what has been allotted to you' (see note on **2.3**). As elsewhere (e.g. **4.3**, 'brief and fundamental precepts'), he reminds himself that the key principles of this project are few in number ('how few things you need to master'), **2.5.3**. The intended goal is happiness as conceived in Stoic theory, that is, not just the life according to reason and virtue, but also one marked by other features (which depend on the pre-existence of virtue), including 'a smoothly flowing life' (LS 63 A(2), C(4), see further Gill 2006: 154–6). The idea of 'god-fearing' probably evokes the linkage between one's own reason and will and that of Zeus, identified as the embodiment of pervasive active rationality in the universe (D. L. 7.88 = LS 63 C(3–4)).

2.6 The theme of the need for urgency is here directed at Marcus' relation-ship towards himself (**2.6.2**). Marcus criticizes his current attitude towards himself and urges himself to a better kind of self-relationship. As brought out by Long 2009: 31–6, the contrast between an 'occurrent' self and a 'normative' one, between what I am now and what I know I should be, is a recurrent theme in Stoic practical ethics. Here, this contrast is expressed in the form of a dialogue with oneself (Marcus addresses his *psuchē*, here used in the sense of 'mind', 'soul', or 'self', by contrast with **2.2**), the subject of which is relationship to oneself. His present ('occurrent') way of treating himself is characterized, graphically, as 'doing violence' to himself' (*hubrizein*, a strong term with Greek tragic connotations), and failing to honour (*timēsai*) himself. The 'normative' self recommended is a state of 'respecting himself' (*aidousthai*). All these reflexive usages are more uncommon and striking in Greek than in modern English. (On Marcus' modes of self-address and ideas about the self, see also van Ackeren 2011: 260–87, Long 2012.) He concludes by reminding himself that well-being (here, *eumoiria*) depends on oneself, not others, by implication because it is 'up to us' to seek to develop virtue and thus happiness (compare the idea in **2.1.3** that we are the only ones who can 'harm' ourselves), thus underlining in a different way the need for a proper rela-tionship to oneself.

2.7 This chapter explores two forms of lack of moral focus, both described in terms of 'wandering'. The first (**2.7.1**) is the failure to give yourself 'space' (or 'leisure', *scholē*) to 'learn some new good lesson', i.e. to give more thought to fundamental ethical principles (compare **2.4** and **4.3.1–4.3.3**). Instead, you are 'distracted' by 'external events', implying that you think happiness depends on these, rather than being 'up to us'. The second (**2.7.2**) type of wandering derives from the first; because you have not used reflection to establish a moral focus, your whole life is, literally 'aimless'. The need to define a single *telos* ('goal in life') is a central theme in ancient ethics, from at least Aristotle onwards (see further Annas 1993: 27–46); and the idea that a life not based on a reflectively based goal is 'wandering' is stressed in much Hellenistic ethics. Marcus' idea of the aimless as being 'exhausted' (*kekmēkotes*) by life or virtually dead seems to echo a famous treatment of this theme in Lucretius 3 (esp. 1046–52, also 1053–75), which is adapted to the needs of Stoic ethics by Seneca (*Ep.* 82.2, *Brev. Vit.* 12.9). Marcus' final sentence uses terms which have a precise meaning in Stoic psychology: 'motive' (*hormē*), often translated as 'impulse', and *phantasia* ('impression' or 'appearance') (see LS 53 Q–S, compare Brennan 2003: 260–9). But, as often in *Med.*, they are not used in a specifically technical way here.

2.8 A variant of the theme of **2.6**, that working towards happiness (which depends on virtue) depends on our own agency (here, the 'movements' of our own mind), not those of others. However, the point is that we should not think that this process *depends* on the reactions of others. Having 'natural affection' (*philostorgia*) for others and seeking to benefit them is an integral part of the process of ethical development that leads towards happiness (compare **2.1**, **2.5.1**). This chapter presupposes Stoic ideas about ethical development and happiness, especially as these are formulated by Epictetus, with his recurrent emphasis that happiness is 'up to us', that we must 'examine' our impressions, i.e. the contents of our own mind (*Ench.* 1), and that our happiness does not depend on others (*Ench.* 3, *Diss.* 3.24.84–3.24.88, compare Long 2002: chs. 8–9). The term *parakolouthein* used here, 'follow closely', is a favourite term for Epictetus (e.g. *Diss.* 2.16.3, 2.26.3).

2.9 On the part–whole language used here, see note on **2.3**. The last sentence underlines the linkage between thinking about oneself as part of a larger whole (the universe conceived as an ethically significant framework) and seeking to live a life 'according to nature' (i.e. carrying out the

developmental process that leads towards the Stoic goal of life). The idea that nobody and nothing can 'prevent' us (any of us) from carrying out this process is recurrent in *Med.* (e.g. **3.12.2**); compare Epict. *Diss.* 1.4.18–1.4.21, 1.17.21–1.17.28). On the part–whole theme in Stoic ethics, see LS 63 C, and on the fact that we can all make progress to the life according to nature, see LS 61 K–L, also 60 B–C.

2.10 Here, Marcus commends Theophrastus (*c.*371–287 BC), Aristotle's successor, for presenting doing wrong through desire as morally worse than doing so through anger. Theophrastus is said to have based this distinction on two grounds. The person doing wrong through anger is induced by pain, whereas the one doing so through desire is driven by pleasure which is a more 'self-indulgent' and 'more unmanly' kind of motive (**2.10.2**). Secondly, the angry person is responding to wrong done to him, whereas the other person is motivated by his own desire for pleasure (**2.10.3**). The distinction ascribed to Theophrastus is similar to one drawn by Aristotle, in *EN* 7.6, contrasting the ethical status of *akrasia* ('weakness of will') resulting from anger (*thumos*) with that based on desire or appetite (*epithumia*). Aristotle differentiates between motivation based on pain and on desire for pleasure (1149b20–1149b24); he also presents anger as an impetuous, partly irrational, response to previous wrongdoing, whereas desire expresses the person's own motivation to pleasure (1149a24–1149b1).

   Although there is no other evidence that Theophrastus himself drew this distinction, scholars are inclined to accept this passage as a largely reliable report of his views, especially in the light of the similarity with Aristotle, *EN* 7.6. It is listed as fr. 441 in Fortenbaugh et al. 1992, and discussed by Fortenbaugh 2011: 261–3, who accepts the whole passage as genuinely Theophrastean.

   This chapter is a rather surprising and atypical one in *Med.* In Stoic ethical theory, all wrongdoings are seen as equally bad, as expressions of error or folly; and anger and desire or appetite are both seen as defective types of desire; also anger is regarded as a subdivision of desire (Cic. *Fin.* 4.74, *Parad.* 3; Stob. 2.90.19–91.9 = LS 65 E). Although *Med.* does not refer elsewhere to the idea of the moral equality of wrongdoings, it was a widely known, and often criticized, feature of Stoic theory. Also Marcus, in line with standard Stoic theory, normally condemns all forms of anger (on his approach to emotions, see Introd., text to nn. 130–4). It is true that Marcus does signal the contrast with Stoic theory. Although commending Theophrastus for speaking 'like a true philosopher' and 'as a philosopher should', he qualifies this comment by adding as 'as people rather commonly do make such

comparisons' (**2.10.1**, **2.10.3**) (I do not follow Dalfen 1987, who emends *philos-ophou axiōs* to *philosophōs* in **2.10.3**.) From a Stoic standpoint, though not an Aristotelian one, the distinction is rather 'common' or 'conventional' (*koinot-eron*) and out of line with theory. Marcus also uses Stoic phraseology for passions in **2.10.2** to describe the effects of anger, namely, 'turning your back on (or "rejecting") reason' and 'contraction' (*sustolēs*) (compare LS 65 A (1), (6–8), B(1), C). The addition of 'unconscious', *lelēthuias*, perhaps reflects the Aristotelian view that anger is a partly irrational and impetuous responses (Arist. *EN* 7.6, 1149a25–1149a34). But the phraseology does not match the explicit point being made, since anger is presented here in a relatively posi-tive light, whereas the Stoic-style language used conveys negative connota-tions. The chapter is also unusual in praising Aristotelian, by contrast with Stoic, ethical thinking. When Marcus adopts an exceptionally open doctrinal stance, vis-à-vis Epicurean thought, for instance (as in the 'providence or atoms' theme), this is normally on the ethics–physics interface, rather than within ethics (compare Introd., text to nn. 242–68). So the position taken in this chapter is exceptional in various ways.

2.11 This is one of a number of passages where Marcus raises fundamental questions about the nature of the universe and the significance of the possible answers for leading a good human life. Often, these chapters pose the alternative 'providence or atoms'. This alternative is not posed here, although an analogous contrast is drawn at one point regarding the gods and their care for humankind (**2.11.2**). This chapter is one of the less problematic treatments of this theme, on the assumption that Marcus' standpoint is a Stoic one. Having raised the question of the scope and nature of the gods' care for humankind, he answers it in terms which are consistent both with Stoic ideas about divine providence and their thinking on what is truly good. Thus, the passage is consistent with the aim of posing the 'providence or atoms' alternative suggested in **4.3.3**, **4.3.5**, namely, to enable him to reaffirm his confidence in the universe as an ordered and providential whole, and thus support his normal way of life based on Stoic ethical principles (Introd., text to nn. 242–68).

Marcus begins by reminding himself that he may die at any time. He then maintains that the gods, if they exist, would not allow human beings to suffer something bad—which death might seem to be (**2.11.1–2.11.2**). Momentarily, he leaves open the question whether or not the gods exist and have concern for human beings—though at once suggesting that, if this is not the case, there is no reason to want to continue to live in that kind of

world (**2.11.3**, compare **6.10.2**). (This is the point at which the chapter intersects most closely with the 'providence or atoms' theme, since the Epicureans, who hold the atomic world-view, deny that gods care for human beings, compare LS 23.) However, he goes on immediately to reaffirm his confidence in the existence and providential care of the gods, expressed in the power of human beings never to experience 'what is truly bad' (**2.11.4**). Here, Marcus presupposes both Stoic belief in divine providence and the Stoic theory of value, i.e. that only virtue is good in a true sense (compare LS 54, 58). He then argues that, if things different from virtue (i.e. the 'other things', *tōn loipōn*) were truly bad, the gods, being providential, would have given human beings the power to avoid these, just as they have given them the power to avoid vice or wrongdoing. It is inconceivable, he argues, that 'the nature of the whole' (i.e. the divinity immanent in the universe) 'could have overlooked these things' and have failed to discriminate between good and bad people in this respect (**2.11.6**). But it is, manifestly, the case that both good and bad people experience what are, in technical Stoic terms, 'indifferents' including life or death; therefore the latter cannot be good or bad in a true sense, and thus, to return to the starting-point of the chapter, our inevitable death is not a bad thing (**2.11.7**).

Relevant background for this chapter is the fact that, while Stoics agreed on the fact of divine providentiality, there was continuing debate about the scope and limits of divine care for human beings (LS 54). As noted earlier in connection with **1.17** (main note to **1.17**, para. 4), Cicero argues that divine care extends to specific individuals (*ND* 2.164–2.167), though it is not clear whether he thinks divine care is limited to the human capacity to exercise virtue or includes their external success and failure (that is, the possession or loss of 'indifferents'). Closer to Marcus' concerns are comments by Seneca and Epictetus, suggesting that the gods cannot determine people's bodily state or survival but they are able to ensure that people have scope for ethical choice or development towards virtue (Sen. *Ep.* 58.27–58.29, Epict. 1.1.7–1.1.12). Marcus suggests that divine power is limited in this respect only because such things as bodily state do not constitute what is good or bad; otherwise the gods would have been able to determine this as well. For the most part, then, the chapter explores the question within the normal range of possible Stoic ideas on this question; the brief questioning of the existence and providentiality of gods serves only as a prelude to reaffirming this point by reference to Stoic assumptions. (See also **6.44**, which pursues related themes).

2.12 This chapter is, by implication at least, another example of the analytic or 'stripping' method illustrated earlier by reference to **3.11** (Introd., text to nn. 98–103). Marcus invites himself to go beyond the surface 'impressions' (*ta emphantazomena*) of things (**2.12.3**), as expressed, for instance, in material bodies, perceptions, people's opinions, or the fear induced by the prospect of death. He urges himself to grasp the true nature of things, using 'analysis of the concept' (*merismos tēs dianoias*), in the case of death (**2.12.3**). He also stresses that determining all these things is a matter for 'the power of the mind' (**2.12.1**). As well as urging himself to analyse things in this way, Marcus also suggests the kind of conclusions he will reach. These centre on the ideas that material objects are transitory, that perceptions which activate pleasure and pain are trivial or 'cheap', even 'dead'; that people's opinions are generally worthless, and that death is nothing but a 'function of nature' (**2.12.3**).

The syntax of this passage is rather awkward, with a series of indirect questions, depending on a single main verb: 'these questions are for the power of the mind to determine' (**2.12.1**), applying both to what precedes and follows this clause. The abrupt syntax reinforces the emotional effect of the language which is often highly coloured and negative. However, as in other examples of the 'analytic method', Marcus implies that a rational technique of reflection is being applied, which combines ethical judgement with a recognition of the physical nature of what is involved (in death, for instance) and a kind of dialectical or logical scrutiny (compare **2.13.3, 3.11, 10.11, 11.2.2**). But the key underlying idea is an ethical one: namely, that things other than virtue, seen as dependent on reason, are 'matters of indifference', including bodily change and death (compare **2.11.6, 11.6**).

Some phrases in the chapter have Platonic connotations, for instance the contrast between the objects of perceptions and mind (**2.12.1**, compare Pl. *R.* 507a–511e), or the idea of fear of death as 'childish' (**2.12.3**, compare Pl. *Phd.* 77e). The last sentence especially evokes a number of Platonic and Aristotelian passages suggesting the idea that one achieves contact with divinity by exercising rationality in knowledge or contemplation (e.g. Pl. *Alcib.* 132c–133c, *R.* 611c–612a, *Ti.* 90c, Arist. *EN* 10.7–10.8, esp. 1177a12–1177a18, 1177b30–1178a4). Passages of this kind reflect a type of 'core-centred' or 'essence-centred' psychology that is at odds with Stoic psychophysical and psychological holism, as argued in Gill 2006: 4–11, 29–46, 75–100. However, here as elsewhere, Marcus uses Platonic-style language to convey an ethical message that forms an integral part of Stoic theory, linked in the final sentence with the idea of the mind or ruling centre as one's inner *daimōn* (compare **2.2**). In the final phrase, the text is

problematic: I follow Farquharson 1944: 28, in deleting *echē(i)* and reading *diakeētai*, rather than Dalfen 1987 who does the reverse (though the sense is much the same in either case).

2.13 The chapter begins and ends with the theme of adopting the right attitude to other people. Marcus criticizes (as 'pathetic') someone who is preoccupied with what is going on in other people's minds instead of focusing on the contents of his own ruling centre or guardian spirit. The chapter ends by describing how we should treat other people in a way that reflects proper attention to our own guardian spirit. More puzzling is the opening criticism of someone who wants to find out everything about the world and 'searches into the depths of the earth'. The latter phrase is cited from the fifth-century BC poet Pindar (fr. 292) by Plato (*Tht.* 173d–173e). It is used there to illustrate—and commend—intellectual curiosity, by contrast with obsessive interest in what other people are doing. Why does Marcus pick up this phrase, as it seems, from Plato but use it negatively? He may conflate it with a similar phrase used, negatively, in Pl. *Apol.* 18b, 19b. But, regardless of what he remembers about the Platonic passages, Marcus seems to view both features (curiosity about the world, and obsession with other people's views) as, equally, failures to attend to the state of one's own mind or character. It may be worth remembering his negative view of philosophical enquiries, including 'the study of celestial phenomena' (**1.17.22**, compare **7.67**), which are not directed at the goal of ethical improvement (see Introd., text to n. 17).

The theme of the importance of maintaining a proper attitude towards one's mind or ruling centre, conceived as one's guardian spirit, is a recurrent theme in *Med.* As noted already, this idea is firmly based in earlier Stoic theory (e.g. D. L. 7.88 = LS 63 C(3–4)) and is also treated prominently by Seneca (*Ep.* 41.2) and Epictetus (*Diss.* 1.12, 1.14, compare 2.18.12–2.18.13). The focus here is on what it means to 'serve' (*therapeuein*) this guardian spirit and on the way that doing so will affect one's attitudes to both gods and other human beings. 'Service' (*therapeia*), a term which can also mean 'cure' or 'healing' involves keeping it free from passions (bad emotions) and errors, including 'discontent' at actions by gods or humans that might otherwise induce passions such as anger (**2.13.2**). So serving one's guardian spirit means, in effect, taking forward one's ethical development in a way that informs our responses both to the gods and humans.

What the gods provide deserves our 'reverence' or 'respect' (*aidōs*), rather than discontent, because of their goodness (or virtue, *aretē*, **2.13.3**); this is a variant on the idea that we should accept our fate on the assumption

that the causal web, or fate, is shaped by divine providentiality (compare note on **2.3**). As regards human beings, when they act in a way that might otherwise induce passions or discontent, we should remember they are 'relatives' (fellow-members of the brotherhood of humankind), and that they are acting out of ignorance of good and bad, which we should treat as a disability like colour blindness (compare **2.1**). Hence, instead of responding with anger, for instance, we should feel pity 'in a certain way'. The qualification reflects the fact that, in Stoicism, pity is a passion, although a humane, pity-like response is recommended in such cases by Epictetus (e.g. *Diss.* 1.18.3, 1.28.9). So the chapter returns to the opening theme of how we treat other people, but focuses now on how such treatment is transformed by proper attention to our own state of mind.

2.14 In broad terms, this chapter falls into the second main strand of Marcus' reflections, on death and human (or cosmic) transience. This strand is, again broadly speaking, consolatory, and reflects the typical ancient philosophical consolatory approach to death, that of inviting us to re-examine the categories in which we think about death and life and in that way to adjust our emotional responses. This strand in the *Meditations* can be linked (and sometimes is linked explicitly) with the first strand, the core ethical project of self-improvement: this project consists, in part, in coming to terms with the inevitable fact of death and transience (Introd., text to nn. 140–57).

The idea that length of life is irrelevant for happiness, the topic addressed here, is common ground between Stoicism and Epicureanism (see further Gill 2006: 88–9, 118). Two of the points made in this chapter have partial analogues in Lucretius' (Epicurean) argument that 'death is nothing to us': namely that the difference between a short and a long life is insignificant and that one's experience in life is essentially the same whether you live for a long or short time (compare **2.14.2** and **2.14.5** with Lucr. 3.946–3.949 and 3.1090–3.1094, taken with Warren 2004: ch. 4.). However, the main theme in the chapter seems to have a distinctively Stoic basis. Although our evidence for Stoic thinking on time is not very adequate, one striking point which emerges is the idea that the present is radically different in conceptual status from the future and past. As Chrysippus put it, only the present 'belongs' (*huparchein*), whereas the past and future 'subsist' (*huphestanai*) (Stob. 1.106.20–1.106.23, compare Plu. *Mor.* 1082 A = LS 51 B(4) and C(5)). Both Seneca and Marcus seem to build on this point in stressing in various ways the significance of the idea that we should think of ourselves as living *now* (in the present moment), rather than over time (e.g.

Sen. *Ep.* 49.3, 77.12, *Med.* **3.10**, **12.3.4**). In some cases, this idea is used to encourage urgent attention to profound ethical questions or pressing ethical tasks

Here, the primacy of the present is deployed by Marcus to counteract the desire for length of life, on various grounds. Since life is lived in the present, all lives (whether long or short) are to that degree the same (**2.12.1–2.12.2**). As all we have is the present (while we are alive), we cannot lose that; we do not experience the future, so we cannot lose this by having a shorter life (**2.12.3–2.12.4**). Those who have lives of different length lose the same thing (namely the present), since all life takes place in the present (**2.12.5–2.15.6**). Marcus embeds in his reflections a rather different line of thought, which is also designed to undermine the desire for length of life. Referring to the (characteristically Stoic) idea that events move in a series of recurrent cycles throughout eternity (LS 52), he suggests that it therefore makes no difference whether you see the same thing for a hundred years or infinite time (**2.12.5**). This suggestion works to counteract the desire for infinite life, but is less relevant to what seems to be envisaged elsewhere in the chapter, namely, the desirability of a longer or shorter life within a normal human lifespan. (A similar point is sometimes made about certain Epicurean arguments against the desire for length of life: LS vol. 1: 154.) Presumably, Marcus introduces this idea here, because the notion of eternal recurrence offers a challenge of a different kind to the normal view of a human life as lived in a linear fashion over time.

2.15 The words quoted both report a saying by the fourth-century BC Cynic Monimus, and a retort to him. His claim, which seems to express a kind of scepticism (he presented life as an illusion or 'painted veil', S. E. *M.* 7.88, 8.5), is self-refuting. If the claim is true, his words represent just what he supposes, and have no further validity. However, as Marcus goes on to suggest, Cynic sayings of this kind can be seen as having a 'core meaning' (*to nostimon*), which expresses something that is both true and potentially useful. For instance, a version of this idea attributed to the third-century BC Cynic Bion (Stob. 3.41) is close to a recurrent theme in *Med.* (e.g. **3.9**, **4.39**, **5.26**, **8.47**). What matters is not what happens externally but the formation of correct judgements about their value and significance, above all, the judgement whether or not what happens is good or bad. On the history and key figures of Cynicism, and its influence on Stoicism, see Bracht Branham and Goulet-Cazé 1996, Desmond 2008; for a survey of Cynic ideas, see Moles 2000, Gill 2013a: 93–8.

2.16 This chapter explores a claim that forms an important strand in much ancient ethics, that vice constitutes a kind of sickness or distortion of our nature. This claim is central to Plato's *Republic* (e.g. 443d–445a, 588b–591e), and is firmly incorporated in such Stoic doctrines as that the human goal is 'the life according to nature' and that 'passions' are psychic sicknesses (LS 63 B–C and 65 R–S, on the latter idea, see Tieleman 2003: ch. 4, Gill 2010a: 280–300). This chapter begins by alluding to these Stoic themes, as well as the view that we should think of ourselves as part of the 'body' of humankind (compare Cic. *Off.* 3.21–3.22, 3.32 and **2.1.4**). The human mind 'does violence' (*hubrizei*, compare **2.6.1**) to itself (i.e. to its own nature) when it becomes an 'outgrowth' (*apostēma*) and a kind of 'tumor' (*phuma*) on the universe. And it 'grows apart' (causes *apostasis*) from the universe when it resents what happens (i.e. the outcome of the causal nexus or fate, compare **2.3**) and fails to take account of the fact that our natures are part of a single larger nature (**2.16.1**). (The text of the last clause in **2.16.1** is problematic, but I have followed Dalfen 1987 here.) On the ideas about ethics–physics interface in Stoic thought implied here, see Introd., text to nn. 213–32.

The first point seems initially complete in itself; but then it becomes clear (in **2.16.4**) that this is only the first of a numbered list of ways in which we can 'grow apart' from or 'do violence' to our nature. The list combines attitudes and behaviour affecting other people (the second and fourth items) with those concerning our own self-direction (the third and fifth items). The implication is that, for human beings, the 'life according to nature' consists in combining both kinds of virtuous action. This, in turn, suggests that, to work towards 'the life according to nature', we need to take forward the two aspects of ethical development, conceived as 'appropriation', in Stoicism, and combine these in a way that co-ordinates the two kinds of progress (see Introd., text to nn. 106–9, suggesting that this forms an integral part of Marcus' core project in *Med.*).

It is worth noting that this list is drawn up in a way that highlights connections between these two aspects. For instance, wanting to do someone harm (the second item) is linked with anger (one of the passions), and this leads naturally on to the idea of being 'defeated by pleasure or pain', i.e. experiencing passions (third item). Behaving with 'pretence and falsehood' (fourth item) entails failure to develop the virtue of truthfulness (whose importance is stressed in **2.17.4, 3.12**). Finally, shaping your life as a whole by reference to a single overall end or goal (*telos*) (fifth item) is formulated in terms which evoke the idea, which is central for Stoic thinking on social development, of humanity as part of a single 'city and constitution' of

rational animals (**2.16.6**, compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.64 (= LS 57 F(3), see also LS 67 K–L). The phrase 'reason and rule' evokes the idea of 'natural law', used in Stoicism both in connection with the goal of life to be adopted by the ethical agent (e.g. D.L. 7.88 = LS 63 C(3) and in connection with ideal social conduct (LS 67 R–S). Thus, in the chapter as a whole, Marcus brings out what it means to live 'according to nature' (in these two, inter-related aspects) by itemizing the faults we need to avoid if we are not to 'do violence' to ourselves and our role within nature.

2.17 This chapter offers a very clear example of the combination of what were presented earlier as two of the main strands in the *Meditations*, the core project of ethical self-improvement and theme of death and human, or cosmic, transience. It also exemplifies, in **2.17.4**, the salient link between these two strands, namely that a crucial part of the ethical project consists in coming to terms with these painful facts of human experience (see further Introd., text to nn. 140–57).

The chapter has a carefully crafted style and structure. On the style of this chapter, in its different stages, see Giavatto 2008: 138–40, 162–3. On Marcus' various styles as responding closely to the needs of his content, see van Ackeren 2011: 308–16, Giavatto 2012b. The chapter begins with a powerful survey of the different facets of human transience, couched in the form of short phrases, creating a verse-like effect, and including a series of metaphors (**2.17.2–2.17.3**). Both the idea (everything is in flux) and the style evoke the sixth-century BC Presocratic philosopher Heraclitus, who was a significant influence on Stoic thought and is a strong presence in *Med.* (compare **4.43**, **4.46**, **6.15**, **6.42**, also Long 1996: 56–7, and van Ackeren 2011: 178–80).

This sequence is broken by a rhetorical question and swift response, presenting philosophy (*philosophia*) as the only effective guide in this world of transience (**2.17.4**). Philosophy is then characterized by a list of qualities, also couched, like the picture of human transience, in short, reiterative phrases with a rather poetic effect ('unviolated and unharmed . . . to do or not to do'). The presentation of philosophy focuses first on internal self-direction (maintaining our 'guardian spirit' in the right way) and then on using our rationality to come to terms with the dimensions of human and cosmic transience presented graphically at the start of the chapter ('accepting what happens . . . and waiting for death with a confident mind').

At this point, the style becomes more measured, with longer clauses and more prosaic diction. Also, at this stage, Marcus offers a Stoic analysis of the features of human transience expressed earlier in Heraclitean, and

rather poetic, phraseology. This transience is a function of the continuous transformation of the four elements of which 'every living creature is composed' and into which it will inevitably dissolve. The chapter moves to its close with a second rhetorical question (**2.17.5**), by which Marcus suggests that this process of transformation happens at every level in the universe, affecting the elements themselves, and therefore should not cause us to fear. (Compare **10.7**, **11.20**; see also LS 47 on the elements in Stoic theory, and van Ackeren 2011: 178–80, 382–9, on this physics-based response to the concern about human transience and the intended 'consolatory' effect of this response.)

The chapter closes by answering the rhetorical question just posed with the assertion that all this is 'in accordance with nature, and nothing bad can be in accordance with nature'. This conclusion does not, I think, refer only to the preceding explanation, in terms of Stoic physics, of the imagistic statement of transience presented at the beginning. Also 'in accordance with nature' is the capacity, illustrated in this very reflection we are reading, of human beings to use philosophy to shape or reshape their character and understanding (as outlined in **2.17.4**) and thus to come to terms with the ineluctable fact of human transience.

Book 3

'Written at Carnuntum'. This heading, placed at the start of this book (or the end of Book 2), indicates that the book was written during Marcus' campaigns against the German tribes Marcomanni and Quadi. His headquarters were at Carnuntum during 171–3, just south of the border between Germany and the Roman province of Pannonia. He moved his headquarters to Sirmium in 174 (see further Birley 2012d: 224–7).

3.1 The looming presence of death, and the need to respond urgently and appropriately—especially by addressing fundamental ethical questions—is a theme that has already appeared in Book 2 (**2.4–2.6**) and one that Marcus also treats elsewhere in *Med*. Here, he highlights a related concern: the prospect that our mental powers may fail before we lose other, more basic, capacities. In particular, he focuses on the danger that deteriorating powers of reasoning may make us incapable of thinking about the last important questions we need to settle, above all, whether we should decide to end our own life. His phraseology in **3.1.2** ('deal effectively with this very question') implies that the very fact of failing mental powers may make it appropriate to end our life. But, as he underlines in the same sentence, this failure may make it impossible for us to reach a correct judgement on this question at the relevant time. Hence, he suggests in the final sentence, we need to reflect in advance on the considerations that bear on that question, so that we are prepared to put those principles into effect at the relevant time, even if we have lost the capacity to understand fully the reason for doing so. One can only admire the honesty and clear-sightedness with which Marcus faces the prospect of senile dementia and its implications for trying to lead a good life, whether or not one can adopt the policy he advocates.

Marcus phrases the chapter with care—or intense concentration—to reinforce the point that he needs to apply *now* the kind of reasoning and reflective processes that would be needed *then* to reach the right decision about how to respond to the loss of those reasoning capacities. So he begins

by using twice the verb *logizesthai* ('consider' or 'reason', **3.1.1**) which is cognate to the noun used for the mental capacity (*logismou* 'power of consideration', **3.1.2**) required to respond appropriately to the loss of those very powers (i.e. those of 'the understanding of affairs' etc. and 'making proper use of oneself', **3.1.1–3.1.2**). (I have not adopted Dalfen's emendation of *tēs theorias to tas theorias* ('theoretical reflection') in **3.1.1**, but retain the manuscript reading followed by Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953.) Although Marcus seems to be thinking out his response for himself, the chapter is firmly linked with Stoic thinking in several ways. It was a standard feature of Stoic thinking that it might be appropriate to end one's life under a number of circumstances, including physical injury or illness; Seneca cites mental deterioration in old age as one of these circumstances. The basis for this view is not that these factors are bad in themselves but that they prevent one from leading 'the life according to nature', i.e. one directed effectively at the expression of virtue. (See further Sen. *Ep.* 58.35, Olymp. *In Phd.* 1.8, LS 66 G–H, Reydams-Schils 2005: 45–52.) The formulations for the mental powers at issue are also sometimes characteristically Stoic, e.g. (**3.1.1**), 'our grasp of both divine and human matters' evokes the Stoic definition of philosophy (compare S. E. *M.* 9.13). Also, 'determining accurately the measure (literally, 'numbers', *arithmous*) of what is appropriate (**3.1.2**), recalls the idea that virtue forms a kind of harmony (see Long 1996: ch. 9). 'Specifying the content of sense-impressions' (*ta prophainomena diarthroun*), **3.1.2**, and giving affairs 'close attention' (*parakolouthēsis*), **3.1.3**, echo Epictetus' terminology for specifically human (rational) functions (e.g. *Diss.* 1.1.5–1.1.7, 1.6.12–1.6.22, esp. 1.6.13, 1.6.15).

3.2 The key underlying idea here is the Stoic view that, although the world as a whole exhibits providential order and goodness, there are certain unavoidable 'by-products' or 'concomitants' of this order (Gel. 7.1–7.13 = LS 54 Q, esp. (2), also LS, vol. 1: 332). Marcus alludes to this idea three times ('by-products of natural processes', **3.2.1**, 'corollaries of natural processes', 'incidental consequences', **3.2.5**). (Compare **6.36** and **8.50**; see also Hadot 1998: 154–6, van Ackeren 2011: 420–5.) However, Marcus develops this idea here in striking and distinctive ways. The idea that the world as a whole is not only ordered but beautiful is a familiar part of Stoic thought (e.g. Cic. *ND* 2.15, 2.75 = LS 54 C (6), J(3)). Less common is the suggestion that we can see those very 'by-products' as having their own beauty, at least when we recognize that they are corollaries of natural processes such as life-cycles. Marcus presents this thought in a series of

graphic illustrations (which may remind us of the long period, during 139–45, that Marcus spent in study of literary style with Fronto); these images are coupled in the latter part of the chapter with increasingly subtle variations on his main theme.

Marcus begins by citing examples where this recognition, and the correlated pleasure, happens naturally (**3.2.1–3.24**). The term used in **3.2.2**, *epiprepei*, meaning 'catch the eye' but also 'is appropriate' or 'fitting', implies this linkage between the beauty and natural function. He moves on to cases which are only discerned as beautiful when you understand their status as natural corollaries. In this connection he uses emotional language such as 'draws us to them' (*psuchagōgein*) and 'feeling' (*pathos*), **3.2.5**, which one might expect to have negative connotations in a Stoic context, but which are here used positively, for an emotional response that follows a rational recognition of the naturalness involved. This leads to three further points (**3.2.6**). One is that the recognition of the naturalness of living things will make real objects, even not obviously beautiful ones (such as the 'gaping jaws of wild beasts'), no less aesthetically attractive than the representations of artists. This idea had been stated powerfully by Aristotle (*PA* 1.5, 645a8–645a25, esp. 10–15) in connection with his version of natural teleology (on which see Johnson 2005), and Marcus adopts it in support of the Stoic version. Second, Marcus suggests that this recognition of the beauty of natural process will lead someone both to see beauty in old people (compare **3.2.3–3.2.4**) and to 'look at the erotic charm of his own slave boys with chaste eyes', because their looks will be seen as part of the unfolding of nature rather than as objects of sexual lust. Finally, he says that this standpoint belongs only to someone 'who has familiarized himself to nature and its work'. The term used for 'familiarize' is cognate with *oikeiōsis*, the technical word for the Stoic theory of development (see further Introd., text to nn. 82, 86), implying that achieving the kind of recognition described here is part of the outcome of this development. The last two points bring out the linkage between the main topic of the chapter and Marcus' central preoccupation in *Med.*, namely ethical self-improvement.

3.3 This is one of Marcus' many chapters (about sixty) on death. The main theme here, as also in **4.48**, **6.47**, is the futility of human achievements, including that of philosophers, which are of no use in averting the inevitable outcome of death. The tone of most of the chapter evokes that of Cynic writings. Taken in isolation, such chapters support the common view of Marcus as a pessimist. However, the treatments of death are, implicitly or explicitly, counterpointed to Marcus' positive project of

ethical self-improvement; in some cases, training himself to face the inevi-
tability of death is presented as part of this project (see Introd., text to nn.
140–56, including nn. 146, 148 on Cynic influence). Here, this more posi-
tive note appears towards the end of the chapter in the thought that death
is, at least, an escape from subjection to the body. Although the ideas and
phraseology used here are not exclusively Stoic ones, the more positive note
signals a link with Marcus' normal, Stoic-inspired, framework.

In **3.3.1–3.3.3**, the repeated theme is the ironic contrast between the
objectives of those named and the terminations of their lives in death.
Hippocrates was the fifth-century BC founder of Greek medicine;
Chaldeans, i.e. Babylonians, were famous for astrology; Alexander the
Great (356–323 BC), Pompey (106–48 BC), and Julius Caesar (100–44 BC)
were successful Greek and Roman generals. In **3.1.4–3.1.5**, the three
philosophers (Heraclitus, flourished 500–480 BC, Democritus, born *c.*460
BC, and Socrates, 469–399 BC) seem to parallel the famous generals. The
paradoxical theme of **3.3.1–3.3.3** is continued with Heraclitus. His ideas
about periodic transformation of the universe into fire (DK 22 A5, B31) are
juxtaposed to the report that he died of dropsy and tried to induce perspi-
ration by plastering himself with cow-dung (D. L. 9.3–9.4). The comments
on Democritus and Socrates seem simply to continue the motif, found in
the case of Heraclitus, of a humiliating or pathetic end. Democritus' alleged
death by lice seems to represent a confusion with the end of Pherecydes of
Samos (mid-sixth century BC), while the 'lice of another kind' who
destroyed Socrates must be the Athenian jury who condemned him to
death in 399 BC.

In **3.3.6** Marcus urges himself to face death with equanimity, whatever it
constitutes. In his numerous (roughly twenty) reflections on post-mortem
experience, the options considered tend to be extinction, dispersal or disso-
lution, and survival (e.g. **4.5.1, 4.14, 5.33.5, 7.32, 8.25.4, 11.3**). The alterna-
tives offered here, as in the 'providence or atoms' theme, carry connotations
either of Stoicism ('nothing is empty of gods') or of Epicureanism ('uncon-
sciousness . . . no longer subject to pains and pleasures'), respectively. Stoic
thinking on this subject is rather open and unelaborated; some scope could
be left for (more or less temporary) survival, although all human life would
ultimately be absorbed back into the universe (see *SVF* 2.809 = LS 53 W,
and *SVF* 2.811–2.822; also Rutherford 1989: 248). Marcus ends by offering
himself the consolation that after death he will at least no longer be the
'servant' of the body, which is 'inferior' to the 'mind' or 'guardian spirit'
that has to serve it during life. (I follow the text in Farquharson 1944 and
Trannoy 1953, rather than adopting the supplementation in Dalfen 1987.)

Here, as elsewhere, Marcus' Platonic-style dualistic language carries ethical, rather than metaphysical, connotations (compare note on **2.2**). He has just left open the question of his fate after death, so he cannot be assuming the validity of Platonic-style thinking about the survival of the soul.

3.4 This is one of a number of chapters (compare **3.6**, **3.11**) where Marcus takes forward his core project in *Med.*, of ethical self-improvement, by working out the mutual implications of the two strands in Stoic thinking about development (conceived as 'appropriation'), namely personal and social (see Introd., text to nn. 106–9, and Cic. *Fin.* 3.17–3.22, 3.62–3.68 = LS 59 D and 57 F). The focus is mainly on social relations at the beginning and end of the chapter (**3.4.1–3.4.3**, **3.4.7–3.4.9**) and on the ideal character-state in the centre (**3.4.4–3.4.5**). But, throughout, Marcus urges himself to adopt other-related and self-related attitudes that are consistent with each other and with Stoic norms.

Marcus begins by stressing, as elsewhere (compare **2.1**, **2.13**) that he should not think about people in a way that implies that his scope for virtue and happiness depends on them rather than on his own 'ruling centre' (**3.4.1**). By the same token, he should not have thoughts that are 'interfering or malicious' (which would imply that he can determine other people's happiness), though it is entirely appropriate to think about others 'with reference to the common benefit' (**3.4.1–3.4.2**). To achieve this goal, he recognizes the need to 'train' himself (*ethistion*) towards a consistency or integrity of character that consists equally, and relatedly, in internal virtuous qualities and in 'straightforward' dealings with other people, so that he could at any time express his thoughts honestly to them (**3.4.3**).

Marcus elaborates this goal by offering a short character-sketch of the ideal internal ethical state, in effect that of the Stoic sage or wise person, who (though ideal) is normally treated in Stoic thought as the proper object of aspiration for anyone (**3.4.4**). Marcus' description combines quasi-religious language (worship of the 'element seated within', i.e. the guardian spirit or governing centre) with the ideal of *apatheia*, freedom from misguided passions. The style of the description, with repeated short phrases, sometimes underlined by assonance, with adjectives using the 'alpha privative' such as *achranton* ('unstained'), prefigures the character-sketches in Book 1 (e.g. **1.9**, **1.15–1.16**), probably composed later, as well as echoing comparable descriptions in Epictetus (e.g. *Diss.* 4.1.1, see further Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 1–2, 7).

The latter part of this description incorporates proper forms of social relationships; Marcus restates in this form the attitudes he urged on himself earlier (**3.4.1–3.4.2**), namely focusing on his own scope for action, including action that benefits others, but not relying on their judgement for his own happiness (**3.4.6**). In this connection, Marcus underlines the apparent paradox in Stoic ideal social attitudes: that one treats other human beings (or rational animals) as relatives or kin, even while recognizing that many (virtually all) of them have opinions that are not 'according to nature' and may, indeed, lead depraved lives. This complex, asymmetrical attitude to others may seem out of line with the kind of straightforwardness towards which Marcus aspires earlier (**3.4.3**), but still forms, I think, an intelligible part of their theory of proper social relations (compare Introd., text to nn. 106–9, 135–9). In principle, any human being is capable of leading a life 'according to nature' (LS 61 I–J), so this should constitute the norm by which we treat them, even if they fall far below this norm, and in the process 'do not even satisfy themselves' (**3.4.6**, final clause); see further Gill 2006: 256–8.

3.5 Here, Marcus' focus is on the attitude with which he should undertake actions. His initial specification is couched in negative terms (again using adjectives with 'alpha privative' e.g. 'unsociably', *akoinōnētos*), describing forms of motivation and interpersonal style that he should avoid (**3.5.1**). He moves on to the positive state of mind that should underpin this approach to action (on this combination of positive and negative self-command, see Giavatto 2008: 123–4). This is characterized partly in terms of what one might call Marcus' 'ideal self image', someone who is 'manly, mature, a statesman, a Roman, and a ruler' (**3.5.2**). (See further on the function of the internal dialogue in this chapter Giavatto 2012b: 338–9, and on the role in Stoic practical ethics of the interplay between the 'occurrent' and 'normative' self, Long 2009: 26–9.) Also stressed is the theme of inner autonomy or moral independence; the realization of this ideal depends on Marcus' own governing centre ('the god within you'), and does not rely on social pressure or support ('without the need of an oath . . . an inner joy . . . does not need external support . . . be upright, not held upright', **3.5.3–3.5.4**). The text here is problematic but I have followed Dalfen 1987. This autonomy extends to readiness to accept one's fate and die (or take one's life) whenever this is appropriate; for this motif, compare **3.1**, also **3.7.4**, **3.16.4**.

This short chapter alludes briefly to several important Stoic motifs. These include the claim that one's ethical aspirations should be framed in

terms of one's specific social role and given context (Cic. *Off.* **1.115–1.117**, Epict. *Diss.* 1.2, 2.10). Also relevant is the political ideal of expressing one's nature as a rational and sociable animal though full-hearted engagement with a specific role (compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.68 = LS 57 F(8), also Introd., text to nn. 119–22). The idea that proper modes of social attitude and behaviour should be underpinned by inner autonomy and character is developed more fully in the preceding chapter, **3.4**.

3.6 The main theme of this chapter is what was widely recognized in antiquity as one of the most distinctive features of Stoic ethics. This is the claim that virtue alone constitutes the only thing that is 'good' in a real sense and the only proper object of desire and choice, in comparison with which all other so-called 'goods', such as health, pleasure, or fame are only 'matters of indifference'. (See LS 58, 60, 59 D(4–6); the contrast on this point between Stoicism and other theories, esp. the Platonic-Aristotelian ethical theory of Antiochus, is central for Cic. *Fin.* 3–5.) This theme is prominent in **3.6.1** ('anything better than justice, truthfulness . . .') and **3.6.4** ('set up as a rival to the rational and social good (*to logikon kai politikon agathon*) anything alien to its nature (*heterogenes*), such as the praise of the many . . .'). Marcus formulates this idea in terms of the overall goal (*telos*), taken as the focus for the shaping of his life and aspirations (on the centrality of this idea in ancient ethics, see Annas 1993: ch. 1; and, in Stoicism, see LS 63–4). See esp. here 'turn to . . . the supreme good' (*to ariston*)', **3.6.1**, 'once you turn towards that' (**3.6.3**).

This theme is expressed partly by reference to value terms, as just illustrated, and partly in terms of correlated psychological concepts. Thus, in **3.6.2**, the object of aspiration is presented as 'the guardian spirit (*daimōn*) seated within you, who has subordinated to itself all your motives (*hormai*)'. This is then characterized in rather Platonic terms: '[which] has, as Socrates used to say, withdrawn itself from all sensory passions' (*aisthētikōn peiseōn*); the allusion seems to be to Pl. *Phd.* 83a–83b. This phrase might seem to imply Platonic-style mind–body or reason–desire dualism; but the context makes it clear this is simply one way of expressing an ethical (here, value-centred) idea, not a claim about psychological models. (On this feature of *Med.*, see also note on **2.2**, Introd., text to nn. 191–211, and Gill 2007b: 197–8.) Also, this passage, as elsewhere in *Med*, presupposes the Stoic ('holistic') view that emotions, good or bad, are shaped by beliefs about value. In particular, the suggestion that if you place value in anything other than virtue, 'you will no longer be able without inner conflict

(*aperispastōs*)' to maintain that valuation (**3.6.3**), implies the Stoic view that only the wise person is free from internal conflict and that passions express internal conflict (LS 65 A(2), J, R, compare Gill 2006: 93–4, 261–4, 318). See also the idea that, if we place supreme value in 'indifferents', they will 'suddenly take control of us and carry us away' (**3.6.5**); for passions as 'overwhelming' in this way, see LS 65 A(5), J (on *Med.* on passions, see also Introd., text to nn. 130–4).

The chapter has an unusual format, with a single, extended conditional sentence throughout **3.6.1–3.6.3**, with a series of 'if-clauses' and a single main verb 'give no room' (**3.6.3**). There is an echo of this structure in the two short conditional sentences at the end of the chapter (**3.6.6**). The chapter is also unusual in having a slightly rhetorical or ironic tone, since the 'if-clauses' articulate possible lines of thought that Marcus, quite obviously, does not accept. The close of the chapter takes the form of a dialogue with an imaginary objector—another slightly rhetorical gesture. Imagined dialogue does occur sometimes elsewhere in *Med.* (e.g. **5.1**, **5.36**, **8.32**) but is more common in Epictetus, where it is sometimes hard to distinguish from reports of actual exchanges with another speaker (see further van Ackeren 2011: 199–204). Despite the slightly rhetorical style, the chapter conveys Marcus' typical note of moral intensity.

3.7 The first half of this chapter is a compressed version of the themes of **3.6**, framed first as a self-directed imperative and then as characterization of the ideal type of person towards which Marcus encourages himself. A repeated theme (which appears in a different form in the latter half of the chapter) is that of moral integrity or autonomy. First, he urges himself not to place value on (treat as 'beneficial', *sumpheron*) anything that involves wrongdoing, especially in treatment of other people or in forming a desire 'that needs the secrecy of walls or curtains' (**3.7.1**). Then, he presents an ideal person who, because he values his mind and offers 'worship' (*orgia*) to his mind's virtue, has the kind of inner independence that enables him to avoid making his life into a 'drama' (*tragōdia*), and requires neither 'isolation or crowds of people' (**3.7.2**). The second half of the chapter illustrates this kind of moral autonomy in connection with the act of dying, referring (as in the first half of the chapter) first to virtuous modes of behaviour (compare **3.7.1**) and then to one's state of mind (compare **3.7.2**). The idea that length of life is 'a matter of indifference' is a standard Stoic idea (compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.45–3.47, 3.76), and is referred to frequently in Marcus' treatments of the theme of the right way to die (e.g. **2.14**, **4.47**, **4.50**). See also Gill 2006: 88–9, van Ackeren 2011: 167–71.

3.8 A character-sketch of an ethical ideal, presumably one which Marcus takes as a goal for aspiration. The focus is, first, on the type of character involved (one that is thoroughly 'cleansed' or healthy), next the readiness for death conferred by this character-state, and, finally, the mode of inter-personal conduct typical of such a person. The initial characterization alludes in vivid terms ('pus or abscess or festering sore', **3.8.1**) to the common Stoic view of passions as psychological sicknesses (compare LS 65 L, R; also Tieleman 2003: ch. 4, Gill 2010: 280–300). The Stoic view has Platonic antecedents; and the coupling of 'disciplined' (or 'punished', *kola-zomenon*) with 'cleansed' (i.e. healthy) may also evoke the Platonic linkage between punishment and cure (e.g. Pl. *Grg.* 477e–479c, compare Mackenzie 1981: 175–9). The second point (**3.8.2**) centres less on conscious acceptance of death (as in **3.7.3–3.7.4**) than on the idea that the good person's state of character makes his life, at any time, 'not incomplete' (*oude asuntelē*). The ideal of a 'complete life' (*pantelēs bios*) also figures prominently, though with different connotations, in Epicurean thought, Epicur. *KD* 20–1 (= LS 24 C(2–3)). For the ideal of 'time-independent' perfection of happiness as a theme in both Stoicism and Epicureanism, see Gill 2006: 88, 118. The idea of the actor leaving the stage (of life) at the right time has Stoic and Cynic connotations (e.g. Epict. *Diss.* 4.1.165, Luc. *Menippus* 16). The chapter ends by describing the kind of interpersonal attitudes and conduct associated with this character-state; as in **3.6–3.7**, the keynotes are integrity and moral autonomy. Despite the various connotations of some of the images used in the chapter, the ethical ideal is a thoroughly Stoic one.

3.9 This short chapter takes us deeper into key Stoic ideas than we might at first expect. The starting point is the instruction to 'revere' or worship your capacity for judgement; our doing so (i.e. revering this capacity) is presented as what ensures that the judgements we form are in line with 'nature and the constitution of a rational being'. Secondly, 'it is this' (revering this capacity again) that produces 'freedom from hasty assent' etc. The termi-nology is strongly evocative of Stoic characterizations of the 'goal of life' (*telos*), notably that in Chrysippus' *On Ends* (cited in D. L. 7.88 = LS 63 C(3–4)), where a prominent place is given to the idea of 'following nature' or 'following the gods'. Similarly, the starting point here, the idea of 'revering' one's capacity for judgement echoes the idea of the mind as one's guardian spirit in the same passage. The phrases 'constitution of a rational animal' and 'familiarization (*oikeiōsis*) with human beings' evoke the two strands (personal and social) of Stoic thinking about development as 'famil-iarization' or appropriation' (e.g. D. L. 7. 85–6 (= LS 57 A) and Cic. *Fin.*

3.62–3.68 (=LS 57 F)). The Greek word for 'freedom from hasty assent' (*aproptōsia*) is a technical term for one of the marks of the 'dialectical virtue' of the wise person (D. L. 7.46 (= LS 31 B(2), also Epict. *Diss*. 2.8.29).

In effect, Marcus is urging himself to exercise his mind or capacity for judgement in a way that enables him to continue the developmental pathway (*oikeiōsis*) whose ultimate outcome is the achievement of the goal of life (*telos*) that is identical with wisdom. The fact that he gives himself this command and stresses how much depends on following it imply the Stoic view that all human beings, as rational animals, are constitutively capable of achieving this goal—it is 'up to us', as Epictetus puts it (compare Epict. *Ench*. 1 and *Diss*. 1.4.1–1.4.5; also Introd., text to nn. 80–2).

3.10 This is one of many chapters in *Med*, where Marcus invites himself to view himself from a cosmic standpoint or 'view from above' (on this theme, see Introd., text to nn. 218–19). The tone appears at first sight negative or detached, but there are some hints of a more positive ethical framework. He begins with the idea that 'each of us only lives in the present, this brief moment of time' (**3.10.1**; on the Stoic background to the contrast between the present and the past or future, see note on **2.14**). He moves on to the smallness of our lives and of 'the corner of earth where it is lived' (**3.10.2**). This leads in turn to the smallness or brevity of fame, which depends on a succession (or relay, *diadochē*) of people each of whose lives are short. Any one of these ideas, and whole clusters of them, can be found often elsewhere in *Med*., juxtaposed, with varying degrees of explicitness to a positive ethical framework. All the ideas of **3.10** reappear, for instance, in **4.3.7–4.3.8**, presented explicitly as a warning against 'the trivial desire for fame' (**4.3.7**) and as one of the 'concise and fundamental principles' that Marcus needs to keep to hand to sustain him in his life (**4.3.3**). It seems likely, then, that in this chapter 'these few things' (**3.10.1**) refer to the following reflections, and not teachings found in other chapters. The whole sequence of ideas, then, is not only a reminder of the broader cosmic context of our small lives but also a disincentive to attach weight to fame, which is, in Stoic terms, 'a matter of indifference'. For the idea that most people (i.e. the non-wise, or, more broadly, people unaware of the framework of ideas that Stoicism tries to convey) 'do not know themselves' (**3.10.2**), compare **3.11.5** or **8.52.3**.

3.11 On this chapter, see Introd., text to nn. 98–115.

3.12 This chapter encapsulates two key Stoic ethical claims, namely that virtue is both necessary and sufficient for happiness and that acting

virtuously is within our power as agents. The first claim is formulated as a conditional sentence, with repeated 'if' clauses' (conveying in different ways the idea 'if you act virtuously'), followed by a short main clause, 'you will lead a good life' (i.e. achieve happiness, *euzōēseis*), **3.12.1**. Marcus' phraseology recalls—yet again—D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3–4), suggesting Marcus knew this passage well. The use of the phrases 'right reason' and 'the guardian spirit' evoke this passage, and the chapter restates the account of the relationship between virtue and happiness offered there. In the first 'if' clause, the presentation of virtuous action in terms of a series of adverbs ('with determination, vigour, and good humour') may evoke standard Stoic ways of formulating the goal of life: see e.g. Stob. 2.76.13–2.76.15 (= LS 58 K(2)) and Cic. *Tusc.* 5.81 (= LS 63 M(1)).

The idea of readiness to 'give back' (*apodounai*) the guardian spirit on death matches Marcus' view (in line with Stoic thinking) that death may mark our termination, and thus the end of our maintenance of our guardian spirit (for the phrase 'giving back' the power of life, compare **6.15.4**). In the second 'if'-clause, 'waiting for nothing and running away from nothing' (in technical Stoic terms, 'selecting and dis-selecting') suggests that we should not attach value to securing 'indifferents' (instead of trying to act virtuously) (LS 58). The phrase 'heroic truth' is slightly unexpected, perhaps evoking the Aristotelian idea of 'heroic virtue' (*EN* 7.1, 1145a18–1145a25), or simply commending truth-telling strongly (on Marcus' striking emphasis on truth-telling, see Brunt 1975: 8–10). The emendation to 'Roman' truth (based on the phrase *Romana veritas* in a letter from Fronto to Verus) adopted by Dalfen 1987 seems an unnecessary change from the manuscript reading. The idea that human beings as rational animals are constitutively capable of the path recommended here (compare **2.9, 8.32.1**) is strongly marked in Epictetus (*Ench.* 1, *Diss.* 1.1.12–1.1.17) and is firmly based on Stoic theory (LS 61 K–N, 62 C).

3.13 Marcus here combines two pervasive themes in Hellenistic-Roman practical philosophy, both of which he deploys often: that of philosophy as psychological medicine (compare note on **3.8**, also **5.8, 10.35**), and of keeping philosophical doctrines ready to hand (compare **4.3.1–4.3.3**, also Introd., text to nn. 20–2). These ideas are linked in turn with a phrase, 'understanding divine and human affairs', which is a standard Stoic formulation for philosophy (compare **3.1.1** and S. E. *M.* 9.13, Aët 1, Preface 2 = LS 26 A). This formulation suggests the stress on the interface between ethics and physics (study of nature) which is a distinctively Stoic feature; theology is seen as the culminating subject within physics (Plu. *Mor.* 1035E,

compare LS 26). Marcus' reflections in *Med.* refer frequently to this inter-
face, as part of his project of providing a broader, philosophical framework
to make sense of his life; 'you should carry out each action, even the
smallest, remembering the bond between the two spheres' (**3.13.1**). In this
book, for instance, **3.2**, **3.3**, or **3.11** illustrate different aspects of what is
involved.

Marcus' emphasis falls on the practical application of this linkage ('you
will not succeed in any human action without reference to the divine or vice
versa', **3.13.2**, compare 'the bond between the two spheres', **3.13.1**).
Presumably, what this means is that in any action, of whatever kind, you
should use the human-divine (ethics-physics) framework of Stoic philos-
ophy as a basis. (Alternatively, he might mean that you bear this framework
in mind both when performing 'human actions' such as public administra-
tion and 'divine' ones such as religious rituals.) However, at the theoretical
level, as noted in the Introduction (text to nn. 161–7), there is continuing
scholarly debate about exactly how we should understand the relationship
between these two areas, in particular whether physics is foundational for
ethics or the two areas are reciprocal or mutually supporting. This brief
passage, which reflects Marcus' recurrent interest in the interface between
human and divine affairs, suggests the second view by its stress on the
mutual implication of the two areas.

3.14 The main point here, as often elsewhere (compare note on **2.4**), is that
Marcus must put everything aside (not 'wander', compare **2.7.2**, **4.22**) and
focus on fundamental principles that provide an ethical basis for his life.
The usual note of urgency is sounded strongly here: 'hurry to your final
goal'. The term *telos* refers primarily to the overall goal of a human life
(understood in Stoic terms, compare LS 63 A–C), but it also implies the
end of life (death) for which Marcus must also hurry to prepare himself
'while it is still possible'.

Exceptionally in *Med.*, Marcus refers here to writings prepared earlier,
which he 'put aside for his old age' (for more generalized reference to this
idea, see also **2.2.2**, **2.3.3**). We know little or nothing about these writings. It
has been suggested that 'your accounts of the deeds of the ancient Romans
and Greeks' may have been a morally instructive treatment (like Plutarch's
biographies or Valerius Maximus' exemplary narratives; on such writings
as partial models or parallels for *Med.* 1, see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn.
17–23). Cato the elder prepared such writings for his son (Plu. *Cat. Ma.*
20); if Marcus had ever written his, they would have been unlikely to have
had much impact on his son Commodus, who proved a disastrous emperor.

There has been much scholarly debate about 'those notebooks of yours' (*hupomnēmatia*), and the 'extracts (*eklogai*) from their (Greeks and Romans) writings', especially on the question whether either term refers in some way to *Med.* themselves. *Med.* do contain quite a number of quotations (e.g. **7.35–7.46, 11.22–11.39**), though only ones which have some bearing on the philosophical and ethical concerns of *Med.* Preparing such 'selections' of writings was a widespread ancient practice; we know that Marcus (and Fronto) did so as part of Marcus' rhetorical education during 139–45. *Med.* themselves could be described as 'notebooks' (*hupomnēmata*). However, the whole thrust of this chapter, as outlined earlier, is to divorce what Marcus needs urgently to do now (i.e. to focus on the pressing philosophical reflection he records in *Med.*) from the non-relevant activities summarized in the second sentence of the chapter, which may be included in the 'wanderings' of the first sentence and the 'empty hopes' of the third sentence. The fact that Marcus uses here the diminutive form, *hupomnēmatia*, implying distancing or disparagement, makes it yet less likely that he has *Med.* in mind here. For this view, and for further discussion, see Rutherford 1989: 28–9, Hadot 1998: 30–2, van Ackeren 2011: 333–6.

3.15 Like other dismissive comments on 'they' and 'them' in *Med.*, e.g. **2.1.1–2.1.2, 3.3.8**, this passage evokes the Stoic contrast between the (ideal) wise person and the non-wise or 'fools'. The comment that 'they have no idea what is meant by terms such as 'stealing, sowing etc.' (i.e., on the face of it, rather straightforward terms) recalls the Stoic paradox that only the wise person, because of her possession of objective knowledge, can perform what seem to be ordinary or self-evident tasks (Stob. 2.66.14–2.67.4 (= LS 61 G)). However, such passages are not strictly in line with Stoic theory, since, in Stoic terms, virtually everyone (Marcus included) is non-wise. Marcus seems to have in mind a rather broader class of thoughtless people, i.e. those who are not committed to the Stoic project of ethical self-improvement towards the goal of wisdom, or even aware that this is needed. Other passages in *Med.* suggest what the deeper meaning might be for some of the terms used here: e.g. 'stealing' (compare **10.13.2**, which is an offence of the mind or character and not just hands), 'sowing' (compare 'seed' in **4.36.2**, interpreted as any vehicle of natural change).

The style of the passage also recalls passages by Heraclitus criticizing those who fail to grasp the deeper significance embedded in reality, which needs special insight to uncover; compare **4.46** and **4.29**, which couch criticism of lack of understanding in terms which cite or evoke Heraclitus. The

idea of 'a different kind of sight' from that of the eyes also has Platonic connotations, e.g. *R.* 518b–519b. But Marcus uses this image elsewhere too (e.g. **3.2.6**, **4.29.2**) in line with Stoic ideas. In any case, both Heraclitus and Plato were seen by Stoics as contributors to their theories (Long 1996: chs. 1–2), so allusions to their thought or language would not necessarily be seen as introducing connotations alien to Stoicism.

3.16 This chapter combines a version of the three-fold psychological division sometimes found in *Med.* (compare note on **2.2** and Introd., text to nn. 191–211) with three different functions or capacities (**3.16.1**). At first sight, this passage seems to be an example of a quite standard move in Stoicism, the use of the *scala naturae* to correlate the functions or capacities of different natural kinds and, especially, to distinguish the special capacities of human beings, as rational animals, from those of non-rational animals. The psychological division and allocation of functions seem initially normal, though in Stoic theory both 'perceptions' (*aisthēseis*) and 'impulses' or 'motives' (*hormai*) would be linked with 'animation' (i.e. *psuchē*), the level above *phusis* ('nature'), taken to be a property of animals in general. (See e.g. LS 57 A(4–5), C, 53 A–B, G–H, 63 D–E; also Inwood 1985: ch. 2, Long 1996: ch. 10, Sedley 2012: 404.)

However, Marcus, increasingly, uses negatively coloured language to characterize both the capacities or those natural kinds or types of people who possess these capacities (**3.16.2**). 'Receiving impressions by images' (*tupousthai phantastikōs*) is fairly neutral (but perhaps suggests passivity and superficiality), whereas 'being drawn . . . by the puppet-strings of impulse' (*neurospasteisthai*) is strongly negative (the latter image is a favourite of Marcus', compare Pl. *Lg.* 644d–645b and **2.2.4**, **6.16.1**, **6.28**). Also, 'impulses' or 'motives' are, rather startlingly, correlated with 'wild beasts, effeminates (*androgunoi*), Phalaris (sixth-century BC tyrant of Acragas in Sicily), and Nero (Roman emperor, 54–68)', the latter both used as paradigms of tyranny and cruelty. Finally, the most advanced (rational) function, the property of 'mind' or the 'governing centre', namely adopting courses of action that seem 'appropriate' (*kathēkonta*), is linked with 'those who do anything whatever behind closed doors'. The latter image perhaps evokes those who exploit 'the ring of Gyges', Pl. *R.* 359d–360d, to gain invisibility and thus do in secret the unjust things they really want to do.

So it becomes clear that Marcus' main focus is on distinguishing between virtuous and non-virtuous uses of the rational function. (For Marcus', rather non-standard, use of the *scala naturae* as a basis for moralization, see Introd., text to nn. 233–6.) Contrasted with the negatively

described use of this function in **3.16.2**, we have 'the special characteristic of the good person' (*agathos*) in **3.16.3**. All the items then cited are rational actions, including, 'nor disturbing it with a mass of impressions', i.e., in more technical terms, having 'rational impressions' (of a virtuous kind), compare LS 39 and 53 Q–T. Although the contrast between the negative characterization of non-rational capacities and the positive description of the good exercise of rational capacities seems to suggest Platonic-style psychological dualism (reason vs. emotions or desires, see note on **2.2**), Marcus' point is quite different. His aim is to underline that all psychological functions, including rational ones, can be used well or badly (**3.16.2–3.16.3**). Marcus concludes with a positive characterization of the good use of rational functions, which incorporates many motifs already found in the two preceding books (see e.g. **2.5**, **2.11**, **2.17**, **3.5**, **3.6**, **3.11**). As elsewhere in *Med.*, this depiction (in effect, that of the normative wise person) sets out the goal of aspiration for Marcus, shaping the way he thinks about his actions in life and his preparation for death.

Book 4

4.1 Here, and in a number of other chapters, Marcus deploys a distinctive feature of Stoic ethical theory, the idea of wishing with 'reservation' (*hupairexis* or, in Latin, *exceptio*). The underlying idea is that, if we act 'according to nature', we will only wish or desire or choose (in a strong sense) what is good (virtuous), and, though we 'select' things that seem advantageous to us, we do so, recognizing that they are not good in themselves. We pursue them 'with reservation', and if obstacles prevent our obtaining those things we adapt our selection accordingly. (Compare **5.20, 6.50, 10.33**; Sen. *Tranq.* 13.2–14.1. Epict. *Diss.* 2.6.9–2.6.10 (= LS 58 J), *Ench.* 2; Inwood 1985: 119–26.) In his formulation of this idea here, Marcus uses *hulē* ('material') first to suggest the craftman's attempt to impose form on matter (and thus to achieve his 'objectives', *proēgoumena*, compare **5.20.3**), and then to suggest the 'material' for an alternative course of action when an obstacle arises. The 'blazing fire' (by contrast with the 'small lamp'), presumably, corresponds to wish or desire or choice that grows bigger (and more 'in line with nature') by accepting that certain obstacles must be accepted as fated (compare LS 58 J again). The metaphor may have been inspired by the idea of divine will as 'a designing fire' that pervades everything, coupled with Marcus' recurrent theme that we should bring our will into line with that of the divine director of the universe (LS 46, esp. A(1), also 63 C(3–4)). The term used for the action of the fire, 'appropriates' (*exoikeioō*, compare **10.31.6**), may be another implied allusion to the theory of development as 'appropriation' (*oikeiōsis*), see also notes on **3.2, 3.9**), since the process linked with fire here fits into the progressive modification of our objectives that constitutes personal ethical development (compare LS 59 D(3–5)).

4.2 Here Marcus states in compressed form the recurrent idea in *Med.* that actions which are not to be 'random' need to be performed in line with one of the 'principles' (*theōrēmata*) (compare **11.5**), elsewhere *dogmata* ('doctrines'), e.g. **3.13**, that lie at the core of Stoic ethics. These principles

'perfect' or 'complete' (*sumplēroō*) the 'art' of living; Marcus just says 'the art' but clearly has this art in mind. The 'art of living' is a pervasive idea, especially in Plato and Stoicism (see further Sellars 2003). Stoic uses of the notion tend to be especially linked with taking virtue (not 'indifferents') as your goal, LS 63 A–F. See **11.5**: 'What is your art? To be a good person', and note on **4.1**.

4.3 This is a rather long chapter in which Marcus, after writing *Med.* for some time (if they were written in the order in which we read them now), reflects, in an unusually self-conscious or 'second-order' way, on what he is trying to achieve with his notebook (see Introd., text to nn. 18–22). He urges himself to find inner resources to avoid resentment and other emotions or desires and enable him to support his normal activities (**4.3.1–4.3.3, 4.3.9**), summarizes a number of the philosophical ideas he uses for this purpose throughout *Med.* (**4.3.4–4.3.8**), and concludes by specifying two precepts he regards as especially important (**4.3.10–4.3.12**).

   The opening theme and its reprise (**4.3.1–4.3.3, 4.3.9**) seems to reflect what is sometimes seen as a distinctive feature of first- and second-century AD philosophical writing, namely a new 'turn inwards' or shift towards 'care of the self' (see e.g. Foucault 1990: 41–5). See e.g. 'retreat into yourself', 'trouble-free retreat . . . in his own mind' (**4.3.2**), 'retreat into this little garden of yourself' (**4.3.9**). However, in Marcus' case at least, this should not be understood as implying egoism, solipsism, or reliance purely on personal or individual resources. The 'retreat' from pressing day-to-day tasks (*negotium*, in Latin), sought in country estates by members of the Roman élite (**4.3.1**), is used by him to review a series of 'concise and fundamental principles' (*brachea kai stocheiōdē*), elsewhere described as 'doctrines' (*dogmata*) or 'key points' (*kephalaia*), which are closely based on Stoic ideas, though sometimes formulated in distinctive ways. The aim of this process is described as being first to secure ease of mind (*eumareia*), explained in Stoic terms as being 'good order' (*eukosmia*; for the latter idea, compare **3.7.4**, and Cic. *Off.* 1.17, *Fin.* 3.21, Sen. *Ep.* 120.11). See also 'to cleanse you from all distress' (*lupē*), **4.3.2**. (I presuppose here the reading of Farquharson 1944: 591, rather than Dalfen 1987; also I do not follow Dalfen in deleting 'and you too are especially inclined to feel this desire', in **4.3.1**). The aim is also specified as being 'to send you back . . . to the activities to which you return' **4.3.3**, compare 'look at things as a man, a human being, a citizen, a mortal creature' (**4.3.9**). In other words, Marcus' 'retreat' is designed to enable him to draw on a range of philosophical resources (mainly based on Stoic ethics and the ethics–physics interface), with a

view to shaping his emotions and state of mind and enabling him to address his practical role again in the light of this broader framework of significance. On the 'care of the self' and introspective dialogue in *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 32–55, discussing Foucault's approach to this topic, esp. Introd., text to nn. 53–5, arguing that Marcus' treatment of this topic is best interpreted in terms of an 'objective-participant' conception of self. See also Hadot 1995: 206–15, 1998: 35–53, van Ackeren 2011: 231–87, Long 2012; more broadly Gill 2010: 328–44.)

In **4.3.4–4.3.8**, Marcus cites a series of ideas intended to counteract misguided emotions he might otherwise feel; he presupposes the Stoic view that emotions are shaped (positively or negatively) by beliefs (see further Introd., text to nn. 130–4); all the themes are treated often elsewhere in *Med.* The first set of ideas (**4.3.4**) aims to counteract 'resentment' at 'human wickedness', by a reminder of the fundamental brotherhood of humankind (compare **2.1**, **3.11.4–3.11.5**) and the recognition that human enmity is terminated by death (compare **4.32.1**). The second set of ideas (**4.3.5**) addresses resentment at 'what is allocated to you from the whole' by recalling the 'disjunction', 'either providence or atoms', and 'the arguments proving that the universe is a kind of city'. A disjunction (*diezeugmenon*), is an argument based on something *either* being x *or* not-x; it is a standard form of Stoic argument (see LS 35 A, E), though Marcus' use of this form in connection with the 'providence or atoms' theme is sometimes rather non-standard (see also Giavatto 2008: 213–28, 2012a: 417). Here, as sometimes elsewhere in *Med.*, Marcus refers to this theme simply to reassure himself of the providential nature of the universe (that it is a 'kind of city'), as assumed in Stoic theory. On the 'providence or atoms' theme, see Introd., text to nn. 242–68.

The third set of themes (**4.3.6**) seeks to counteract the power of 'bodily things', that is, 'pain and pleasure', and their corrupting influence on our ethical judgements. Marcus reminds himself of the capacity of the mind (*dianoia*) to recognize 'its own power', that is, to exercise ethical judgement independently of current sensations of pleasure and pain ('movements, rough and smooth, of the breath' (*pneuma*)). For the psychological language used, see **2.2** and **5.26**, also Introd., text to nn. 191–211; on the importance of exercising autonomy in the way we pass judgement on our sensations, especially before adding the judgement that something is good or bad, see Introd., text to nn. 181–90. The fourth set of themes (**4.3.7–4.3.8**) aims to counteract 'the trivial desire for fame' (*to doxarion*) by a reminder how transient and narrowly based such fame is, as well as by underlining the 'emptiness' and 'fickleness' of the opinions on which it is based. More

broadly, Marcus accentuates the infinitesimally small scope and scale of a human life, as well as the questionable character of those people 'who will sing your praises'. (For these themes, compare **2.17.1**, **4.19**, **4.48.3**, **4.50**.) The idea of 'the earth as a point' (*stigmē*) was adopted by Greek astronomers for their calculations and then passed into general knowledge (compare Farquharson 1944: 595).

The two final ideas presented as 'among the most readily available' (*procheirotata*), **4.3.10–4.3.11**, are the moral autonomy of judgement (compare **2.15**, **5.19**) and human transience (compare **2.17.1–2.17.3**, **6.15**). These ideas are then summed up by a quotation (**4.3.12**), which is no. 85 of the sayings of Democrates. Although these sayings are collected along with those of the well-known fifth-century thinker, Democritus (this one is DK 68 B115), they are not generally taken by scholars to be by Democritus. Why are these two principles singled out as most important for Marcus' purpose here? They seem to stand for two major strands in *Med.* (his core ethical project and human death and transience), on these strands, see Introd., text to nn. 72–4. The assumption seems to be that if they are taken together (on this point, see Introd., text to nn. 140–57), this will provide the best available safeguard against the passions presented in **4.3.4–4.3.8**.

4.4 This chapter is unusually closely argued and syllogistic in character. The main argument is that the fact of our common (human) rationality offers proof for the idea of a common law, citizenship, and constitution. A crucial link between common reason and common law is the idea that there is kind of 'reason which tells us what to do'. It is argued, further, that our individual intelligence, rationality, and law derive from the common one (**4.4.1–4.4.2**). Support for this second claim is offered by reference to our physical make-up. Just as the elements in our body are derived from the four basic (common) elements, so, it is argued, our intelligence must come from somewhere else, i.e. the common 'city' (**4.4.3**). **4.4.1–4.4.2** is very close to Cic. *Leg.* 1.23, which argues for the existence of a common (or natural) law, i.e., one distinct from conventional, national laws (for this idea, see LS 67 R–S, also Inwood 1999: 105–112, Vogt 2008: ch. 4). So it looks as though this part of the chapter is closely based on Chrysippus' argument for the existence of natural law.

One aspect of Cic. *Leg.* 1.23 missing from **4.4.1–4.4.2** is the idea that reason, law and citizenship are common to humans *and gods*; Schofield 1991: 68 fn. 13 suggests that this may be a deliberate omission on Marcus' part and one that reflects a distinctive view of human-divine relations. However, in **2.1.3**, Marcus bases our membership of the brotherhood of

humankind on the fact that we share 'the same mind and portion of divinity', and in **2.3** a part–whole argument similar to **4.4** is based on the idea that human beings form an integral part of a providential whole that constitutes 'the works of gods' (**2.3.1**). In **10.1.4**, Marcus presents as his goal being a member of the community (*sumpoliteuesthai*) of gods and humans. So Marcus probably presupposes the standard Stoic idea, but focuses here on the human side of the argument.

4.4.3, taken in isolation, might seem puzzling, because it seems to treat our intelligence or mind as different in kind from the physical elements making up our body, whereas, in normal Stoic thinking, 'mind' or psyche is identical with 'breath' (*pneuma*) or, alternatively, with fiery air (LS 47). Sedley, accordingly, suggests that Marcus offers a distinctive picture of the natural world, in which mind is 'a distinct and possibly even non-physical item alongside the material elements out of which *pneuma* is constituted' (2012: 398). However, Marcus seems to be referring to the elements only by way of analogy or comparison, rather than aiming to offer his own distinctive account of the physical universe. See also **11.20**, where the elements are contrasted with human agency for purely moral purposes, as Sedley (2012: 402) recognizes, also **2.17.5** and Introd., text to n. 235. Marcus' point in **4.4.3** is that our intelligence comes from a common source (a whole which is prior to any of the parts) just as our constituent elements come from a common source (the elements). In **2.3**, for instance, a similar part–whole argument is offered, but with no separate status allocated to 'mind'; indeed, Marcus seems to assume that he is an integral part of a universe of compounds made out of elements (see note on **2.3**, also following note on **4.5**).

4.5 Death, like birth, is a 'mystery' (*mustērion*), not in the sense of a ritual initiation but as a puzzle that needs to be explained, in the account offered here as the dissolution of elements. In **2.17.4–2.17.5**, the idea of death as dissolution of elements is one of the facts we recognize through the guidance of philosophy (for other views of death considered in *Med.*, see note on **3.3.6**). Death is 'nothing to be ashamed of', as explained more fully in **12.23.5**, because it is 'neither a matter of choice (*aprohaireton*) nor unsociable (*akoinōnēton*)', and is thus not 'bad' (*kakon*), in Stoic ethics (compare LS 58). Notice the idea that it is part of the 'constitution' (*kataskeuē*) of 'an intelligent creature' (or animal, *zōon*) to be composed of physical elements (compare **2.3**). This supports the view that Marcus does *not* maintain a world-view in which 'mind' is seen as different in kind from the elements (see also note on **4.4.3**). I follow Farquharson 1944: 601 in reading *kataskeuē*,

which Marcus standardly uses in this sense (compare **3.9.1**, **8.45.1**), rather than *paraskeuē*, the manuscript reading adopted by Dalfen 1987.

4.6 The idea that people necessarily act in line with their ethical character (good or bad), but that this does not detract from their status as responsible agents, is a central part of Stoic thinking on determinism and agency (e.g. Gel. 7.2.6–7.2.13 = LS 62 D). Marcus presupposes this idea ('Given the character . . .'); compare **5.17**, also **12.16**, where the fig-tree and sap image reappears. Here, the implied point is that recalling this fact, along with the imminent death of oneself and the other person and the brevity of fame, will counteract the 'resentment' Marcus might otherwise feel at people's behaviour, by placing it within a broader understanding of humanity and our place in nature. Compare **4.3.4**, which also adds more positive considerations, such as the natural brotherhood of humankind, also note on **2.1**.

4.7 This idea is a recurrent one in *Med.*, e.g. **2.15**, **12.25**. The underlying assumption is that we are psychologically capable of not regarding as harmful, or even painful, things that we do not believe to be that (even if they affect the body negatively); compare **4.3.6**, **4.3.10–4.3.12**, **5.19**, **7.33**. The underlying Stoic idea is that, as rational animals, we need to 'assent' to (rational) impressions, including perceptions, before they have their full effect in producing motivation and affective reactions; see LS 33 C, I, 53 A(5), LS vol. 1: 240, 420–1, Brennan 2003: 260–9. This is linked, in turn, with the Stoic belief that we are only harmed by our own wrongdoing (the only thing that is 'bad' in a real sense), and so cannot be harmed by the actions of other people. See **2.1.3** and note on **2.6**; compare Epict. *Ench.* 30, *Diss.* 4.5.28.

4.8 This brief comment is similar in content to **4.9**. The implication is that ethical defectiveness alone is bad (LS 58, 60), and if this is not present (i.e. if someone is not worse 'in himself' (*auton heautou*), his life will not be worse, and neither his inner state (his character) nor outer state (his life) will be harmed. See also, on Stoic thought on the relationship between ethical character and the quality of a life, LS 61 A, O, 63 F; also Gill 2006: 150–6.

4.9 'The nature of the beneficial', presumably, denotes the goodness or beneficial quality built into nature; so the sentence may suggest that this event (like all events) reflects the providential force (or 'necessity')

embodied in universal nature and the seamless web of events (see also note on **2.3**). See also note on **4.10**.

4.10 This chapter seems designed to analyse the underlying sense of the brief comment in **4.9**, though it is presented as commenting on a common saying, 'All that happens . . .' (**4.10.1**). Marcus' explanation centres on two points. One is that the Stoic conception of fate ('all that happens') is not just a matter of 'the sequence of cause and effect' (i.e. in more technical language, universal causal necessity, without gaps in causation). Fate is also conceived as providential and as being 'in line with justice, and as if things were assigned according to merit' (**4.10.1**). (See LS 54 as well as 55; also Bobzien 1998: 44–58 and note on **1.17**, final paragraph.) The other is, that, in 'looking closely' at this point, Marcus needs to 'combine it' with his understanding of what it means to be a good person 'in the specific sense' (*idiōs*, **4.10.2**). The reference here seems again to be the Stoic conception of goodness in the strict sense (compare LS 58 and 60 again). The point seems to be that, in order to make sense of the providentiality or goodness of fate or nature, Marcus has to bring to bear his ethically informed conception of what goodness means. Thus, the passage reflects the view that, in Stoic thought, ethics and physics (in broad terms) are mutually informing, rather than that physics is foundational for ethics (on the scholarly debate on this point, see Introd., text to nn. 161–7, 213–16). Once combined, the two points (on providence and on good) provide a framework that can help Marcus shape his life properly ('in everything you do', **4.10.3**).

4.11 The implied point is that Marcus should not adopt conventional judgements (*krinein*) about what it means to do wrong to (or 'insult', *hubrizein*) someone, or about the harm that is caused by this. He should see these things 'as they are' (or 'in truth', *kat' alētheian*), i.e. in line with Stoic ethical principles; see note on **4.7**.

4.12 In this chapter, while operating within a Stoic ethical framework, Marcus also seems to be thinking about his own imperial role, as a means of expressing that framework (on this combination, see Introd., text to nn. 119–22). In **4.12.1**, he uses a phrase ('kingly and law-making art') with strong Platonic overtones (see Pl. *Euthd.* 291c) to convey the idea of properly exercised kingly rule ('for the benefit of humanity'). The commendation of change of mind, on sound rational grounds (**4.12.2**), is traditional (e.g. Hes. *Op.* 293–4) but was also adopted by Zeno, founder of Stoicism

(D. L. 7.25–7.26). Marcus twice praises Antoninus' readiness to do this—by implication, unlike many other monarchs (**1.16.3**, **6.30.13**). In the final sentence, Marcus stipulates what these sound rational grounds must be; the conditions set ('for common benefit . . . not because it looks pleasant or popular') match both the political focus of the chapter and Stoic ethical principles. I follow Farquharson 1944: 603–4, in reading *proēgmena*, 'preferences' or 'preferred things' (but not in a technical Stoic sense, LS 58), rather than the *parapaidagōgounta* ('corrections') adopted by Dalfen 1987. I assume it refers to Marcus' considered view rather than the 'redirection' of the advisor mentioned earlier in **4.12.2**.

4.13 This is one of Marcus' occasional use of short imagined dialogues, sometimes in question-and-answer format, to make points in a rather satirical way (compare **4.49.2–4.49.3**, **5.1.2–5.1.4**), a mode more characteristic of Epictetus (see also van Ackeren 2011: 199–204). Here, Marcus seems to be urging himself to use the constitutively human capacity for reason and to use it properly, that is, virtuously (at least to aim to do so). In Stoic ethics to use reason correctly is, by itself, to achieve the goal in life (*telos*), and there is no need for any other objective (LS 63–4). This idea seems implied in the closing words: 'if [reason] does its job, what else do you want?'

4.14 This chapter refers to the Stoic idea of god as 'generative (or 'seminal') reason' (*spermatikos logos*), an immanent principle, shaping the cyclic transformation of elements in the universe (compare D. L. 7.135–7.136 (= LS 46 B)). Marcus conceives his existence (or 'subsistence', *enupestēs*) as being that of a part in this process, and thus, by implication here, makes his own death more acceptable. For similar ideas, see **2.3–2.4**, **4.21**, **7.10**, **10.7**.

4.15 The image depicts our lives as offerings to the same altar (i.e. parts of the same cosmic whole); also incense was regarded as the poor person's offering, so the image has a humbling intent. The second sentence suggests that the time of our death and the length of our lives are of no significance (compare **2.14**, **4.50**, **12.35**), at least compared with the exercise of right reason, as Marcus spells out more fully in **12.35**.

4.16 The chapter begins on a satirical note, as if criticizing the fickleness of conventional judgement. But when Marcus uses his customary language of reverting to his 'principles' (or 'doctrines', *dogmata*) and worshipping 'reason' (for the second idea, compare **4.13**, it is clear that he imagines

people recognizing real moral change in him. Stoicism, like other ancient philosophies, uses the contrast between god and human or beast as a way of expressing grades of understanding or ethical perfection; see Epict. *Diss.* 2.19.26–2.19.27, also *Ench.* 22, on sticking to your principles as a way of bringing about change that others will recognize.

4.17 This chapter offers a vivid statement of the repeated idea that urgency is needed to address the most important task, that of ethical self-improvement. Compare **2.4**, **2.6**, **3.14**; and for the self-command to become good, see **8.22**, **10.16**, and **3.4** on what constitutes being good. The image of something 'hanging' over one's head (here, the 'inescapable' or 'necessary', *chreōn*) is used of one's fate in Sen. *Ira* 3.42.4.

4.18 Here, Marcus restates the importance of moral autonomy (compare **2.6**, **2.8**). He stresses the need to focus on the quality of what he says, does, and thinks, and to use his own judgement about whether this matches his idea of 'what a good person does' (*kata ton agathon*); the latter phrase is unusual but is intelligible in this sense. He should not be concerned with other people, i.e. (presumably) about any judgements they make on his actions, and (in the second sentence) about any judgements he might be inclined to make on them even if they have 'a black (bad) character'. The image of running the race is a striking one, conveying again a sense of urgency (compare **5.3.2**); the 'finishing line' (*grammē*) stands for the *telos*, the end or goal of life, but also death (compare note on **3.14**) I do not follow Dalfen in adding a second *mē* ('not') before *periblepesthai* ('look around at'), and follow the reading of Farquharson 1944.

4.19 The chapter begins (**4.19.1**) by developing the theme that fame is transient because it depends on survivors who are also transient (compare **4.3.7–4.3.8**). The phrase 'all in a flutter' (*eptoēmenos*) evokes one of the characteristics of passion (*ptoia*) in Stoic thought, compare LS 65 A(2). The suggestive image of those remembering as a series (or relay) of torches recalls Pl. *Lg.* 776b, Lucr. 2.78, and Sen. *Ep.* 54.4–54.5. Marcus then adds the point (**4.19.2**) that, even if fame were immortal, it would not be important. This is not only because the person concerned is not immortal too, but because fame is unimportant, since (by implication at least) it is a 'matter of indifference', compared with using your own, independent, human rationality to seek to act virtuously (which is what he means by not rejecting 'the gift of nature', in **4.19.3**). On the conception of human nature presupposed, see e.g. **3.4.7–3.4.9**; on the idea of this nature as

(providentially) 'given', compare **10.28**. The qualification that praise only has value 'to achieve some practical purpose' (*oikonomia*, **4.19.2**) need not be a significant concession. A ruler such as Marcus might be able to use his fame in a way that enables him to act virtuously within his role (e.g. to act more effectively for the public good), but without himself attaching undue value to fame (compare **3.4.4**).

4.20 This chapter also presents praise as unimportant, or at least secondary. Here, however, the focus is on the idea that the beautiful has inherent or intrinsic value, which is independent of whether it is or is not praised. This point applies to beautiful physical objects ('what is popularly called beautiful', **4.20.2**, compare 'emerald', etc., in **4.20.3**). But it applies still more to 'what is really beautiful' (*to ontōs kalon*), and, equally, to 'law or truth of kindness or self-respect' (for this list, see **10.13.2**).

The phrase 'what is really *x* or *y*' and the idea that the *kalon* ('beautiful') represents the highest value (or is identical with the good) have strong Platonic connotations (e.g. *Smp.* 211a–212a, *R.* 475e–480a). But Stoic ethics too, while presenting the good (*agathon*) as the highest value (rather than the *kalon*), sometimes stresses the inherent beauty of the good. See e.g. Cic. *Off.* 1.14–1.15, 1.95, on the beauty of *honestum*, 'right', i.e. the human good; *Off.* 1.14, like **4.20**, stresses that the *honestum* is worthy of praise even if no-one praises it. The Stoic notion of 'good' can include virtues such as 'kindness and self-respect', **4.20.2**, though it is broader in meaning than 'virtue'. The idea that the good (or right) has inherent or intrinsic value is stressed in accounts of Stoic ethics (e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 3.21–3.22 (= LS 59 D(5–6), Stob. 2.71.15–2.72.25 (= 5g–i)). So Marcus probably has a Stoic ethical framework in mind, although this passage is not as closely linked with it as many others.

4.21 Stoicism accommodated a range of views on the fate of the soul (*psuchē*) after death, some supposing that souls survive for a while after death (perhaps until the next world-cycle, others that souls are dispersed on death (Rutherford 1989: 248, compare *SVF* 2.809–2.811). In this chapter, Marcus considers a question that arises on the first supposition (**4.21.1**). The question arises because the Stoic conception of the soul is physical (LS 45 C–D) both in life and after it; hence, one can ask how there is room for all the souls that pass into the air.

Marcus' answer is that souls, like bodies, are gradually transformed into their appropriate elements and then re-absorbed in the ongoing process of change in the universe. Just as dead bodies (made up of the elements of

earth and water) decompose on earth, so souls (made of fire and air, or 'breath', *pneuma*) remain for a while in the air and are then re-absorbed into the 'generative principle of the whole' (**4.21.2**). On the elements, assumed but not specified in this sentence, see LS 47; on the 'generative' or 'seminal' principle, *logos spermatikos* (also conceived as god and fiery air or breath), see D. L. 7.135–7.136 (= LS 46 B), compare **4.14**, **6.24**. Hence, they make room for other souls. An analogous process occurs on earth. When animals are eaten by other animals, their bodies are converted into blood (earth and water), whereas their souls (their animating components) are transformed into fire or air (**4.21.3–4.21.4**).

Marcus concludes by spelling out the explanatory framework used to resolve this question (**4.21.5**). This is the distinction between the material (*hulikon*) and the causal (*aitiōdes*). This is Marcus' version of the standard Stoic distinction between active and passive principles, which can also be identified with the contrast between the two groups of elements: air and fire, earth and water (D. L. 7.134 = LS 44 B, also LS 47 D–G). Though not fully spelled out here, this contrast forms the basis for explaining the two kinds of transformation that provide room both for dead bodies on earth and post-mortem souls in the air. Compare **4.4.3**, on human beings and elements, also, on the causal-material distinction, **5.13.1**, **7.29.5**, **8.11**, also Sedley 2012: 396–7, 398–9.

4.22 After the opening metaphor (compare **2.7.1**, **3.14.1**), Marcus uses standard Stoic terminology to convey a thoroughly Stoic idea, that the right act combines ethically correct motives and correct (true) judgement. The clause 'in every motive (*hormē*), provide the right response (*to dikaion apodidonai*)' suggests the Stoic model of action in which a 'motive' follows 'assent' to 'impressions'. The second clause evokes the Stoic definition of knowledge as a 'cognitive impression' (*phantasia katalēptikē*); Marcus, in effect, urges himself only to assent to such impressions, and thus to maintain his capacity for correct judgement (*to katalēptikon*). On the relevant Stoic theories, see LS 33 C, I, LS 40, also Giavatto 2008: 39–40 (compare **9.6**); on the combination of correct motives and good judgement, see also Epict. *Diss.* 3.2.1–3.2.5, Long 2002: 112–18, 128–41.

4.23 A remarkably poetic passage, largely made up of short, verse-like, phrases, with repeated or similar word or word-order, reminding us of Marcus' long rhetorical training (139–45), including verse-composition with Fronto (compare Kasulke 2005: 272–326; Giavatto 2008: ch. 5). For similar passages (in content and style), see **7.9**, **10.21**; for the idea of

everything happening 'in season', see **9.10**, **12.23**, **12.35**. The underlying idea here and in the other passages just cited is that of accepting one's fate serenely or indeed gladly (compare **2.3**). 'The poet' (**4.23.3**) is Aristophanes, fr. 112; Cecrops was the mythical king of Athens; for the ideas of allegiance to the universe or the combination of local and universal commitment, see **4.4**, **6.44.6**.

4.24 This chapter takes its starting point (**4.24.1**) from a passage by the fifth-century thinker Democritus (DK 68 fr. B3), which was a stimulus for essays by two first-century AD thinkers, Seneca and Plutarch, following an earlier (lost) one *On Contentment* (*peri euthumias*) by the second-century BC Stoic Panaetius. For Epicurean responses to this passage, see Plu. *Mor.* 465F–466A and Diog. Oen. fr. 56 (William 1907). Marcus' initial response is fully in line with Stoic ethics: we should aim not at contentment but at doing 'what is necessary and what the reason of a naturally political animal requires'; if we do this it will bring contentment or peace of mind (like other marks of happiness) as a corollary (LS 63 A, D, F; Epict. *Diss.* 1.4–1.14). A similar view can be found in Seneca's Stoic version of this theme, and an analogous idea forms part of the more doctrinally mixed treatment by Plutarch. (See Sen. *Tranq.* 4, 11, Plu. *Mor.* 474C–476C, also Gill 1994.)

However, Marcus does go on to re-affirm Democritus' advice to reduce the number of things we do, though he does so on the ground that they are not 'necessary', by the Stoic criteria that he has offered (**4.24.3**). He also offers himself practical advice to help him cut down on the number of unnecessary 'impressions' (*phantasiai*), i.e. thoughts—and therefore actions—he undertakes (**4.24.4–4.24.5**). Marcus assumes the Stoic theory of action in which motivation to action is based on assent to 'impressions' (see also note on **4.23**, and Brennan 2003: 260–9). Thus, Marcus ends up by rein-forcing Democritus' view, though in a way that reflects his characteristic stress on the need to focus ruthlessly, and urgently, on the ideas and tasks that really matter from an ethical standpoint (compare **2.4**, **2.5**, **3.1**, **3.4**).

4.25 For conscious self-urging to be a good person, see note on **4.17**. The characterization of what it means to be good develops a salient theme of the preceding chapter (**4.24.1–2.24.2**), the way that the virtuous life, conceived in Stoic terms, leads to peace of mind. A good person is content or satisfied (*arkoumenos*) with his own 'just action and kind disposition', while he is positively pleased (*areskomenos*), a slightly stronger response, with 'what is allocated from the whole'. For each of these two responses, compare **4.18**

(satisfaction with one's own action), **2.3**, **4.23** (joyful acceptance of what comes from the whole. The idea that the (ideally) good life involves combining one's own virtuous rationality with that of the whole, and yields happiness (a 'smooth flow of life') evokes one of the Marcus' favourite passages, D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3–4)).

4.26 This chapter also (like **4.24**, **4.25**) develops the theme that Marcus' (Stoic-inspired) strategy for living will lead to peace of mind. In fact, the opening seems, unusually, to refer to the preceding chapter: 'you have seen those things; now look at these' (**4.26.1**); but it may just be an opening gesture, with no specific reference in mind. In any case, he does return to the same topic, offering himself a series of short pieces of advice, designed to enable him not to 'disturb' himself (**4.26.2**), The further opening advice, 'make yourself simple' (or 'unify yourself', *haplōson seauton*) is less self-evident in meaning. But it fits in with the advice in the preceding chapters to focus his life and activities and to adopt the good (self-contented) life (**4.24–4.24.5**). Also, psychological and ethical integration is an ideal in Stoic ethics as in other ancient ethical theories (see e.g. Cic. *Tusc.* 5.81 = LS 63 M; on Seneca, Gill 2009: 78, 81–3; more broadly, Gill 2006: esp. ch. 2).

The rest of the chapter reads like a resumé of recurrent themes in *Med.*, couched in a way designed to support the message here. The themes are: whoever does wrong only harms himself; all that happens to you is part of your fate; life is short; live in (here, 'take profit in', *kerdanteon*) the present; aim to act in line with reason and virtue ('with sound reasoning and justice'). The chapter ends by recalling the starting point: the aim is to end up 'relaxed', while also 'sober' (i.e. gaining peace of mind by rational arguments rather than alcohol or passion, **4.26.6**).

4.27 This is an example of the 'providence or atoms' theme, which figures in Marcus' review of recurrent topics in **4.3** (see note on **4.3.5**; also Introd., text to nn. 242–68). This is one of the less problematic cases of this theme, and is treated in a way we might expect from **4.3.5** in that Marcus draws on Stoic assumption to restate his standard world-view. Also, the use of the disjunctive formula (either *x* or y, see note on **4.3.5** again) is straightforward; Marcus outlines two alternatives and argues for one of them (there is a difference from **6.10** in both respects).

The chapter begins by contrasting the Stoic (providential) and Epicurean (atomic) world-views (see LS 13, 54), but without identifying them as that, and in a way that is already strongly loaded in favour of the Stoic view: 'an ordered universe or a heterogeneous mass' (**4.27.1**). (The text is uncertain:

but the emendation in Dalfen 1987, 'that forms no proper order' (*akosmētos*), makes the best sense of the end of this sentence.) Marcus first argues that, if 'a certain order subsists in you', there must be order in the universe (**4.27.2**). He is assuming (1) that human beings (as cohesive forms of life and rational animals) exhibit order and (2) that there is symmetry between the universe and human beings in this respect. These are standard Stoic assumptions (see LS 63 C, also LS vol. 1: 319); but it means that Marcus is already presupposing the validity of one of the world-views presented originally as possible alternatives.

He then reinforces the linkage between humanity and the cosmos posited in the first case by stating that 'all things are both distinct and thoroughly blended and thus linked by a shared sympathy'. Here, he assumes the Stoic idea of 'total blending', according to which elements in the universe are both distinct in their properties and yet fully interpenetrated (LS 48). The point is, I take it, that human beings are distinct in their properties and yet form an integrated part of the universe as a whole; this account of the 'shared sympathy' between humanity and universe thus supports the first point made. Again, Marcus assumes the validity of features of the Stoic world-view which is supposedly being questioned. So his argumentation here is not very strong; but at least there is little reason to question his consistency as a Stoic thinker, despite the original posing of the alternatives.

4.28 This is simply a list of negative personal features, the first three linked with the term 'character' (*ēthos*). It has been suggested that the list is meant to explain the unusual phrase 'black character' in **4.18**, and that the whole set encapsulates the vices of tyranny, which is the final item (the 'tyrannical character' is the climax of human vice in Pl. *R.* 9, 571a–580a, with a listing of negative features in 580a). Three of the features constitute the absence of normative human qualities ('bestial, brutish, infantile'), while 'effeminate' and 'stubborn' mark contrasting defects as regards strength of character (for 'manly' as a standard term of commendation in *Med.*, see **1.2** and **3.5.2**); the other terms mark failings in interpersonal conduct. If this passage is consistent with the general approach in *Med.*, Marcus is not just venting his spleen against an unnamed person (contrast the attitude urged in **2.1**, for instance), but listing the kind of qualities he should aim to avoid.

4.29 This chapter is constructed as a series of metaphors, translating notions such as 'stranger', 'blind', 'abscess', into forms of defective understanding or ethical character. The underlying idea is that human beings, as

rational animals, are naturally equipped to see themselves as integral parts of a political community, and of the community or brotherhood of humankind, as well as of the universe conceived as a providential whole, and the linked series of events which occurs within the universe. Thus, anyone who fails to conceive himself in these terms is defective in one of the ways depicted here. In **4.29.1**, the contrast intended, though expressed in the Platonic language of *onta* and *ginomena*, is between the long-term 'contents' and transient 'events' of the universe. In **4.29.3**, Marcus seems (parenthetically) to address the person just described as an abscess, and to remind him that 'the nature which brought you into being also brought this about'; 'this' (*touto*) must refer to 'what happens' (what forms part of the natural web of events) in the universe, which the 'abscess' resents.

The metaphors, as well as the underlying assumptions, recur elsewhere in *Med.*, and are also firmly embedded in Stoic theory more generally. See e.g. 'blind' (**2.13.3**, **3.15**), lacking self-sufficiency (contrast the qualities described in **2.17.4**, **3.5.3**), abscess (**2.16.1**), fragment (**8.34**). Giavatto (2008: 22–5) sees **2.16.1–2.16.2**, **4.29.3**, and **8.34.1–8.34.2**, as forming an interlinked series of images for separation from the 'body' of the state or the universe. For contrasting ideals of human beings as integral parts of wholes, see e.g. **2.3**, **2.9** (universe), **4.4** (universal human or rational community). For related ideas elsewhere in Stoic writings, see Cic. *Off.* 3.32 (state as a body), Cic. *Fin.* 3.64 (=LS 57 F(3–4) (human community as a whole), D. L. 7.87–7.89 (= LS 63 C(2–5) (humanity and universe as interrelated wholes).

4.30 Here Marcus compares himself unfavourably with the Cynics, who, despite lacking the comforts of life, including books, 'stay true to reason', that is, act in line with their principles. Marcus has ample resources for study of philosophy, but presents himself as failing to show the same consistency in sticking to his principles. In the final clause I follow the emendation adopted in Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953, rather than the text in Dalfen 1987.

Cynicism was a philosophical movement inspired by Socrates and founded by Diogenes, which influenced early Stoicism. Despite reservations about the extreme Cynic lifestyle, at least certain Cynics were sometimes idealized by Stoics, such as Seneca and Epictetus. See, on the Cynic life-style, Desmond 2008: ch. 2 and Gill 2013a: 93–8; on Seneca and Cynicism, Griffin 1977: 297–9; and on Epictetus and Cynicism, Long 2002: 58–61.

4.31 Here, Marcus characterizes in very positive terms ('love', *philei*) his relationship to 'the expertise' (*technion*) he has learned, that is, the

philosophically grounded 'art of living', and to the gods, to whom 'he has entrusted all he has, in a full-hearted way' ('the gods' are, presumably, conceived in Stoic terms, as divine providence). On Marcus' 'expertise' and his relationship to it, see also **4.2, 5.1.5–5.1.7, 11.5**. Although Marcus' tone in *Med.* is often austere or bleak, he also sometimes uses positive, even rhapsodic, language, especially in characterizing his attitude to the providential whole or gods (compare **4.23, 12.36**). Marcus suggests that his expertise and relationship to the gods support a style of interpersonal relationships, in which he is 'neither . . . a tyrant or a slave to any human being'. It is likely that Marcus has primarily in mind relationships shaped by moral autonomy (compare **2.6, 2.8**) and the ideal of 'freedom' as understood in Stoic terms (compare Epict. *Diss.* 4.1, and Bobzien 1998: 339–44.) But he may also be thinking of his personal (and political) resolve not to be 'turned into a Caesar' (**6.30.1**, compare **1.14.2**), i.e. to avoid tyranny, as well as not wanting to be tyrannized by others.

4.32 Chapters such as this one (compare **4.33, 4.48, 4.50**), focused on human transience, when taken in isolation, can easily give an impression of futility and pessimism. They are also reminiscent of contemporary Cynic writings on this theme, e.g. Lucian's *Charon* 15 (compare **4.32.1**); see Desmond 2008: 65–7 on Lucian (second century AD) and death as the great leveller. However, as stressed earlier (Introd., text to nn. 140–57), such passages need to be taken in conjunction with Marcus' positive ethical project of self-improvement, to which they are sometimes explicitly juxtaposed, as they are in **4.32, 4.33**.

Here, although the initial focus is on sheer repetition in events ('everything the same'), and the first examples are universal human activities ('marrying, bringing up children, falling ill, dying'), the later examples are more ethically loaded (e.g. 'plotting, praying for someone's death, grumbling at their present situation'. These examples illustrate the kind of behaviour described in **4.32.4** as 'those . . . who, distracted by empty projects, neglected to act in line with their own constitution (*kataskeuē*) (i.e. as rational and potentially virtuous agents) and to hold fast and be satisfied with that'. Such people display the passions that derive from treating as goods 'indifferents' such as 'wealth' or 'consulships and kingships' (**4.32.1**). In pointed contrast, Marcus reminds himself 'that the attention given to each activity has its own proper worth (*axia*) and proportion (*summetria*)' (**4.32.5**). The sense, I think, is both that the attention given to each thing *should be* proportionate to its ethical weight, and also that, *if* it is proportionate, it will have its own worth. Hence, provided

Marcus maintains this sense of proportion, 'you will not lose heart and give up' (**4.32.5**), recalling that ethically well motivated activity has its own inherent value, regardless of the consequences (a crucial feature of Stoic thinking about value, though one much criticized by opponents of Stoicism, LS 64 A–H).

It is of course the case that, for Marcus, as well as for the people reviewed here, his efforts will be terminated by death. The periods cited here are the reigns of the two emperors just before Marcus' lifetime (121–80), that of Vespasian (emperor 69–79), and Trajan (98–117). The term translated 'records' (*epigraphai*) (**4.3.3**) usually means 'inscriptions' but here seems to be used more generally. But the crucial difference is that, here as often elsewhere, Marcus reminds himself that he, like others, will be 'dissolved into the elements' after his 'exertions' (**4.33.3**, compare **4.5, 4.14**), rather than ignoring this fundamental fact of human existence. Also, of course, as well as underlining that length of life is irrelevant to its quality (compare **4.15, 4.17**), he seeks to hold constantly in view the ethical framework which should be applied in human life, as long as it lasts (**4.3.5**).

4.33 The theme and approach are similar to **4.32**, but focused on the futility of grounding one's life on the search for fame (compare **4.3.7–4.3.8, 4.19**). Marcus begins by stressing the transience of fame, using the unusual idea that names once famous gradually come to seem old-fashioned, before falling out of use altogether. The term used, 'archaisms' (*glossēmata*), is one Marcus must have been known well from his rhetorical training with Fronto, who advocated selective use of archaisms (Champlin 1980: 52). His examples are, first, two great heroes of the early Republic (Marcus Furius Camillus, who saved Rome after the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BC and Manius Curius Dentatus, who defeated Pyrrhus in 275 BC). These are stock figures in the Roman exemplary tradition, the kind of figures who feature in the early books of Livy and in Valerius Maximus (on this tradition, see Introd. to Book 1, text to 17–23), along with some less well known names of ancient Roman families (Caeso, Volesus). Then we have famous later Roman politicians and military leaders, Scipio (probably, the conqueror of Hannibal, 234–183 BC), Cato (probably the elder, 234–149 BC), followed by emperors Augustus (63 BC–AD 14), Hadrian (emperor 117–138) and Antoninus (compare **1.16**).

If obsolescence in fame affects those 'who shone out with wonderful brightness', it applies yet more strongly to all the rest, who died 'unseen and unheard', **4.33.2** (Hom. *Od.* 1.242). But, in any case, fame (as a 'matter of indifference') is 'complete emptiness' (compare **4.19.2–4.19.3**). As in **4.32**,

Marcus ends by offering a positive statement in contrast to the negative opening, reformulating his standard aspiration to a virtuous understanding and acceptance of events as providentially shaped (**4.33.3**). This reformulation may pick up earlier motifs in the chapter: 'a just mind and actions done for the common good', along with truthfulness, are qualities that could well have been attributed to some of the figures mentioned earlier, notably Camillus, Dentatus, Scipio, and the elder Cato as well as Antoninus. Also, the idea that events (which must include death) should be greeted as 'familiar' (*gnōrima*) and deriving from a source (providential nature) of the same kind, suggests a different kind of recognition of the well-known from that associated with the famous examples. The implication is, perhaps, that Marcus' philosophically shaped approach to life provides the motivation for performing actions such as those which earned those figures fame but doing them for their own sake, and in full knowledge and acceptance of the death and oblivion that might otherwise seem to invalidate such achievements.

4.34 and **4.35** are brief comments, repeating themes in **4.33**—**4.34** restates the attitude of ready acceptance of fated events in **4.33.4** (and often elsewhere in *Med.*) For the use of the traditional image of the Fates as spinning or weaving threads, compare **2.3.1, 3.11.4**. Clotho may be named here, because she was the Fate that spun the present, whereas Lachesis spun the past and Atropos the future (Pl. *R.* 10, 617c); for Marcus' urging to focus on the present, see e.g. **3.10**. It is characteristic of Stoicism to present traditional religious practices (e.g. divination) as pre-theoretical versions of ideas analysed more effectively by Stoicism (compare Algra 2009). **4.35** restates the content of **4.19.1**, and reinforces the point about the transitory nature of fame and memory made in **4.33.1–4.33.2**.

4.36 Marcus here combines two of his favourite themes, that of transience and the universe as a providential whole. He urges himself to 'observe' or contemplate (*theorein*) the fact that change is a function of 'everything' (not just human life, as stressed in **4.32, 33**), so that 'the things that exist' (*onta*) are also 'coming into being' (*ginomena*); here, Marcus uses Platonic language to convey an un-Platonic world-view (contrast Pl. *R.* 478a–480a, *Ti.* 28b–28c). For this picture of universal change, compare **7.25, 8.50.2, 12.23.3–12.23.4**; for the idea that 'the nature of the whole 'loves' (*philei*) to create new things' (**4.36.1**), compare **9.35.1** ('rejoices', *chairei*). What underlies this is the striking fact that the Stoic world-view combines the idea of nature as a providential whole with a belief in constant change within the

universe (including change that takes the form of recurrent cycles); see LS 46.

One way of formulating this world-view was to conceive god as a 'generative' or 'seminal principle' (*spermatikos logos*), immanent in the universe and bringing about constant change, including the creation of new forms of life (D. L. 7.135–7.136, 7.142 (= LS 46 B–C)), compare Stob. 1.133, 1.153, 1.171, also **4.21.4**. Marcus presents this idea as being that 'everything that exists' is the 'seed' of some future thing, and contrasts this with the more commonplace ('un-philosophical') and limited notion of 'seed' (**4.36.2–4.36.3**).

4.37 This is a pungent formulation of Marcus' characteristic theme of the imminence of death and the need to focus urgently on key ethical ideas and actions. Here, attention falls on creating a certain kind of character-state, one marked by freedom from passions ('undisturbed or free from the suspicion that you may be harmed from outside') and from the inner disunity or conflict these create ('unified', *haplous*, for this combination of ideas, see **4.26.2**) and by positive emotions (*eupatheiai*), 'gracious (*ileōs*) towards everyone'. (On the presentations of emotions in *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 130–4, on Stoic thinking on emotions and inner conflict, see Gill 2006: 249–60). The final point Marcus needs to grasp is that 'wisdom' (or proper thinking, *to phronein*) consists solely in 'acting justly' (*dikaio-pragein*). This seems to be a reminder of the Stoic view that freedom from passions and coherence of character depend on possession of the virtues (see further Gill 2006: 154–7).

4.38 I follow Dalfen 1987 in his deletion of 'the wise' (*tous phronimous*). I take it that this brief comment suggests that if we want to 'look into' (*diablepein*) someone's mind or ruling centre, we need to take note of what they seek and avoid, especially whether they aim at developing and expressing virtue or obtaining 'indifferents'.

4.39 This chapter offers a version of one of Marcus' standard themes: that achieving what is genuinely good or bad does not depend on other people, or on other external circumstances, but on our own judgements and the ethical character or state of mind expressed in these judgements. Here, Marcus formulates this theme partly (**4.39.3**) by stressing that this point about external circumstances applies even to our bodily state, a factor conventionally seen as crucial for well-being (Marcus uses a distancing diminutive, *sōmation*, 'poor' or 'little' body, to underline the message). The

examples offered are medical treatments, that is, illustrations of bodily states which the mind can endure (normally for the sake of gaining bodily health, though that is not Marcus' concern here). For related treatment of this theme, see **6.32**, and **9.41**, highlighting partial convergence on this point with Epicurus. The distinction in value between 'indifferents' and good or bad implied in the chapter is reinforced by the two concluding sentences (**4.39.3–4.39.4**). 'Indifferents' cannot constitute good or bad because they are experienced equally by people who are good or bad in character, that is, by people whose lives are, or are not, 'in line with nature'. On the underlying Stoic theory, see LS 58, 63 A–C, and for the theme of the chapter as a whole, see Epict. *Diss.* 3.24.1–3.24.3, 3.24.27–3.24.29.

4.40 Marcus urges himself to hold in mind a salient feature of the Stoic view of the universe, its strong monism or holism. As Marcus brings out here, the universe was conceived in Stoicism as a unified psychophysical living whole or animal, with a capacity for unified perception and motivating force. This picture seems to have been inspired especially by Plato's *Timaeus*, with its combination of world-soul and world-body, but the Stoics identified Plato's transcendent craftsman-god with the world-soul and dispensed with the notion of a separate ideal pattern for the universe. This embodied god is also conceived as the agent of fate or providence, an idea to which Marcus alludes towards the end of the chapter. Fate was conceived, on the one hand, as a single causal system (with no gaps in causation), and, on the other, as the outcome of all the events in the universe, so that everything is 'co-responsible for what happens' and thus forms a 'kind of web and mesh'. Compare **2.3**, **4.45**, **6.38**, **7.9**; D. L. 7.139, 142–3, S. E. *M.* 9.107, Cic. *ND* 2.58, LS 47 C, 54 A, B, F. On Marcus' picture of the universe, especially its monistic character and the idea of immanent divinity, see van Ackeren 2011: 361–77. On universal causal determinism or fate, see LS 46 A–C, 55; also Bobzien 1998: ch. 1.

4.41 This quotation is not found in Epict. *Diss.*, as transmitted to us (it is listed as Schenkl 1916: fr. 26); it is cited again in **9.24**, though with 'little breaths' (*pneumatia*), diminutive form of *pneumata*, instead of 'little soul' (*psucharion*). Compare Epict. *Diss.* 3.10.15–3.10.16, contrasting the ruling centre and the body characterized as a corpse. These passages illustrate what may be called 'quasi-dualism', which appears to draw a metaphysical, Platonic-style, contrast between mind or soul and body. However, such passages are better understood as making a moral point, that we should exercise our rational agency in directing our lives towards virtue, combined

with the psychological claim that we (human beings) are constitutively capable of exercising our rational agency in this way. See Introd., text to nn. 191–211, and **2.2**, **5.26**.

4.42 Marcus stresses often the need to accept the fact that the universe (which as a whole is good and providential) is in a state of constant change (compare **2.3**, **3.36**, **8.20**). For the component parts of the universe, then, change is 'nothing bad', nor is there anything good in 'emerging' out of change (or 'subsisting' *huphistamenois*), as a result of change. Of course, as he recognizes, this is a difficult perspective to maintain, particularly in the case of the change that involves your own death or survival (**9.19**, **9.21**). Unlike **4.41** and **4.46**, this passage does not cite Heraclitus, though the idea is close to DK 22 B102.

4.43 This chapter offers a further graphic statement of the universality of change (compare note on **4.42**). The phraseology and idea ('river in things . . . violent stream) recalls two famous comments in Heraclitus: 'everything is in flux' and 'you cannot step into the same river twice' (e.g. Pl. *Cra.* 402a, also DK 22 B12, B49a, B91). On Marcus and Heraclitus, see note on **4.46**.

4.44 The ideas here (natural transience and the difficulty most people have in accepting this fact) are similar to those of **4.42–4.43**, **4.46**, though without direct allusion to Heraclitus. It is easy enough to treat features of seasonal change as 'habitual and familiar (*sunēthes kai gnōrimon*), for the second term, compare **4.33.3**). It is more difficult to treat in the same way 'illness and death and slander . . . and whatever pleases or pains those who are foolish (*mōroi*)', i.e. 'indifferents', though this is, by inference, what Marcus recommends.

4.45 The theme here is close to **4.40**. Marcus emphasizes that the Stoic idea of fate as universal causal determinism constitutes more than just a mechanical linkage of events. It is not just like 'the enumeration of separate units' (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4) or 'bare succession'. It embodies a 'rational combination' (*sunapheia eulogos*) and 'a kind of wonderful affinity'. Marcus seems to have in mind, in part, the Stoic belief that the totality of events were shaped by providential care and designed to work out, in some sense, for the best. (Compare LS 54; also Frede 2002 and Meyer 2009.) He also links this belief about the sequence of events (*ginomena*) with the conviction that the underlying realities (*onta*) in the universe are 'harmoniously co-ordinated'

(compare the view of the universe as a coherent whole in **4.40**). Farquharson 1944: 630–1 notes summaries of Stoic teachings on this topic which use similar terminology by the early third-century AD Aristotelian commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisias (*De Fato*, 192).

Marcus uses in this connection a term (*oikeiotēs*, 'affinity'), which evokes the Stoic technical term, *oikeiōsis*, used for types of human and animal development seen as forming part of nature's providential care (LS 57, esp. A, F) and he uses cognate terms in related contexts (e.g. **1.6.5, 3.2.6, 3.9.2, 4.1.2**). The use of this term here may reinforce the idea that the sequence of events in the universe exhibits providentiality. In *Nat. Fac.* 1.12, written during 169–75 (while Marcus was writing *Med.*), Galen also draws a sharp contrast between an organic or 'biological' and providential view of nature (which he adopts) and a mechanical one in which the universe consists of unrelated units, e.g. atoms (see further Gill 2010a: 69). Although there is no reason to think that Marcus and Galen actually discussed these questions (see further Tieleman 2009: 294–6, 299), this shows that the contrast between these world-views was a matter of debate among intellectuals at this point in the second century AD.

4.46 In this chapter, Marcus uses a cluster of quotations (or semi-quotations) of Heraclitus to restate a number of his own recurrent themes. These are themes on which Marcus' thought may have been influenced by Heraclitus, either directly or through the contribution of Heraclitus to Stoic theory. Heraclitean ideas which seem to have had a crucial influence on Stoicism include the (seemingly paradoxical) combination of the reality of constant change in the universe and of an underlying rational principle (*logos*), which lies hidden from most people and renders their understanding limited (making them 'blind' or 'asleep'). See further on Heraclitean influence on Stoicism: Long 1996: ch. 2, esp. 56–7 on Marcus, and (on Heraclitus and Marcus), van Ackeren 2011: 178–80, 384–5. These Heraclitean (and Stoic) ideas also inform **4.46**.

The first theme here is the fact of permanent change in the universe, in particular, that of the change of elements into each other: 'the death of earth . . .' (**4.46.1**) is DK 22 B76c; it is also close in content to DK 22 B31 and related passages (compare Long 1996: 41–4); for this theme in *Med.*, see also **2.3.2, 4.36**. Related Heraclitean ideas often alluded to elsewhere in *Med.* are those of the universe as a 'river' of constant change and of the road 'up and down' which is really the same (**2.17.1, 4.43, 5.23.2, 6.17, 9.28.1**, compare Pl. *Cra.* 402a (DK 22 A6), DK 22 B60 and note on **4.43**).

The second theme is the lack of awareness of most people of key truths about reality, whether those of the nature of the universe or ethics, or the relationship between these); this theme underlies most of the other Heraclitean citations in the chapter. In **4.46.2** ('the person who forgets the road he is taking'), Marcus seems to be quoting Heraclitus (= DK 22 B71). In **4.46.3**, the words 'they are most at odds with that which they associate constantly' is usually taken as quotation from Heraclitus (= DK 22 B72). The following words, 'the reason that governs the whole', seem to have been added, perhaps by Stoics earlier than Marcus, and the following words, 'and the things they meet each day seem alien to them', may be paraphrase rather than quotation, see Farquharson 1944: 632. (I have not adopted the transposition of 'most' (*malista*) by Dalfen 1987, and follow the reading of Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953.) In **4.46.3** ('we should not act like people asleep, since then we seem to act and speak'), Marcus seems to cite Heraclitus (= DK 22 B73); for the idea, see **6.31**. A similar Heraclitean theme alluded to elsewhere in *Med.* is that people generally fail to accept the fact of constant change (**4.42**) or to grasp the hidden nature of reality (**5.10.1, 10.26.3**, compare DK 22 B51, B54, B123).

The final, related theme is failure to exercise our own mind and judgement and reliance on others instead. Thus, Marcus cites (in **4.46.5** 'we should not be like children') (= DK 22 B74). The crucial importance of using our own judgement and not relying on others is stressed often elsewhere in *Med.*, see e.g. **2.13, 3.4.1**.

4.47 This chapter offers a variant on the theme that length of life is of no intrinsic importance, compared to the ethical quality of the life led (compare **2.14, 3.10**). Marcus imagines that an announcement of imminent death (he may be thinking of Socrates' dream that he would die in three days, *PL. Cri.* 44a–44b) renders unimportant the difference between two or three further days of life (unless you are very small-minded or 'low', *agennēs*, in your viewpoint). He urges himself to take the same view of the difference between death tomorrow and many years later. Marcus' thought experiment is rather undeveloped (there are actually a number of reasons one might offer for not adopting this view); but one clear (and credible) point is that a quantitative increase in life should not always be seen as a significant improvement.

4.48 The theme of this chapter is close to **4.32, 4.33** (human transience); and here too, despite the sense of futility, reinforced towards the end, the chapter closes on a positive note, embracing death as an integral part of

nature. The first part (**4.48.1**) is especially close to **3.3** and **6.47**, exploring the paradox that even those who made a special effort in various ways to outdo or master death ended up dying like everyone else. This part is constructed in patterns of three: doctors, astrologers, and philosophers; heroes, tyrants and cities (with three cities named). The description sometimes underlines the failure to grasp the significance (or, rather, insignificance) of death: e.g. 'as if death were some great thing', 'as if they were immortal themselves', also, by implication, 'knitting their brows (i.e. worrying) over those who were ill'. The comment on the tyrants is reinforced with 'exercising the power of life and death with terrible arrogance', thus linking failure to understand the nature of death with moral defectiveness. The cities named were destroyed by natural calamities: Helice, a Greek city in Achaea, suddenly sank into the sea in 373 BC, while Pompeii and Herculaneum, famously, were destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79.

Near the end (**4.48.3**), Marcus encapsulates the sense of futility with images ('yesterday a drop of semen, 'tomorrow a buried corpse or ashes') that illustrate his occasional use of Cynic-style bluntness (see similar images in **12.27.1**, **12.33**, and other such images in **6.13.1**, **9.36**.) However, the final sentence (**4.48.4**) changes the tone, first by using the striking term 'brief moment of time' (*to akariaion*) to recall the theme of living in the present and doing so by aiming to live a life 'in line with nature' (compare **2.4**, **3.10**, and **11.18.10**). Finally, he transforms the image of natural transience in **4.48.3** into 'glad' or 'grateful' acceptance of being part of the cycle of nature; the image of the olive 'blessing the earth that bore it' evokes E. *Heracl.* 826, and the warm, positive tone is especially close to **4.33.3**.

4.49 This chapter takes its starting point (**4.49.1**) from an image used by Homer and Virgil in well known passages (*Il.* 15.618–21, *Aen.* 7.586–60) describing heroic strength of character or bravery in misfortune, and offers philosophical grounds for making this kind of response. Marcus begins with a short imagined dialogue, designed to change the state of mind of someone upset by adversity, and then continues to elaborate the advice, with no specific addressee. Marcus' advice turns on exploring the relationship between three notions, 'bad luck' (*atuchēma*), 'good luck' (*eutuchēma*), and 'failure' (*apoteugma*). What initially seems to be bad luck is re-described as good luck if it enables the person concerned to bear misfortune without becoming upset (**4.49.2–4.49.3**). The basis for the re-description is that nothing can be bad luck if it is not a failure in human nature or out of line with the 'intention' (*boulēma*) of human nature. To experience external

disaster is not out of line with this; what is out of line is failing to fulfil the 'intention' of human nature, namely to become someone who has virtues such as those enumerated here (being just, high-minded, etc.). Bearing apparent misfortune nobly, by contrast, is in line with this intention, and thus must count as good luck (**4.49.4–4.49.6**).

The ability to bear adversity calmly seems initially to be presented as a special feature (a matter of 'good luck' or something that 'not everyone'; could show), like the exceptional courage of the epic heroes (i.e. a product of what Bernard Williams 1981 would call 'moral luck') (**4.49.1–4.49.3**). However, an implication of the chapter as a whole is that this capacity is a function of human nature in general, so that we can all become moral 'heroes' in this sense, if we shape our lives towards what human nature 'intends'. A further implication is that the concept of luck, good or bad, is, ultimately, meaningless, in the context of a providential world-view. The chapter is reminiscent in message and style of Epictetus (see *Diss.* 1.1.7–1.1.13, 1.4.18–1.4.21, 1.17.15–1.17.28). The main underlying theory is the Stoic belief in the constitutional capacity of all human beings as such to develop towards ethical perfection (Introd., text to nn. 80–2).

4.50 The consolatory strategy against death offered here is similar to that of **4.47**. In both cases, Marcus argues from an idea that most people could easily accept (described here as 'un-philosophical', **4.50.1**) to one that is much more counterintuitive and which only philosophical considerations could make fully convincing. The straightforward point is that even those who are exceptionally long-lived ('who have clung tenaciously to life', as Marcus puts it, more tendentiously, **4.50.1**) die in turn, and experience all the disadvantages of old age ('with what people [their contemporaries?] and with what a poor body', **4.50.3**). The names cited may be those of Marcus' era famed for long life; we know that Phlegon compiled such a list in the reign of Hadrian and we can match some of the names with second-century figures.

However, Marcus moves rapidly from this point to the conclusion that length of life is wholly insignificant and that there is no difference between an infant's life of 3 days old (*trihēmeros*) and a life three times as long as that of Gerenian Nestor (*trigerēnios*), a Homeric figure already famous for his length of life (**4.50.6**). This extravagant conclusion would need much more in the way of philosophical support than it receives here (Marcus simply mentions eternity as a relevant comparator, **4.50.5**). Of course, Marcus writes only for himself, and he can take for granted his other many consolatory reflections. However, of these the most persuasive is surely the idea

that length of life is insignificant beside (ethical) quality of life; this point is implied in **4.33.3**, **4.37** (see further van Ackeren 2011: 154–80, esp. 167–9). But the 3 year old infant is nowhere near to achieving the kind of rationally based virtue that would make a life (however long) completely worthwhile, on Stoic grounds. (Contrast the more persuasive Epicurean argument that an 18 year old might have achieved their life-goal of 'tranquillity of mind and painlessness in the body', Warren 2004: ch. 4, esp. 146–8.) So, although this chapter ends with a flourish, it does not perhaps take us much beyond the 'un-philosophical' position with which it began.

4.51 The 'short' or direct 'road' is a metaphor Marcus uses often for focusing on crucial ethical principles and tasks, i.e. acting 'in line with nature' (compare **4.18**, **5.3.2**, **8.7**). In the final sentence, the text is uncertain ('troubles', *strangeias*, is an emendation for *strateias*, 'campaign', adopted by Dalfen 1987, which I follow), and the inclusion of 'every kind of management of resources' (*pasēs oikonomias*) is perhaps puzzling. Presumably, Marcus means that a proper judgement of ethical value prevents us from giving undue weight to such matters, a point also made by Epictetus about household management (*Diss.* 1.9.11).

Book 5

5.1 Marcus frames his self-encouragement in the form, initially at least, of a mildly satirical imagined dialogue of the kind found in Epictetus (compare note on **4.13**) He assumes, and builds on, the theme that his reflections often take place early in the morning (e.g. **2.1.1**, **10.13.1**); for self-urging to get out of bed, see **8.12**. The chapter also assumes the standard Stoic idea, shared with some other ancient theories, that human beings, like other forms of natural life, have their own distinctive function or work (*ergon*), and that the combination of the performance of their functions contributes to 'making up an ordered [providential] world (*kosmos*)' (**5.1.2**). Aristotle *EN* 1.7, in which rationality and virtue are presented as constituting the 'human function', is a famous example of this idea. In Stoicism, this idea is closely linked with the view of development as 'appropriation' (*oikeiōsis*) (e.g. D. L. 7.85–7.86 = LS 57 A); and the suggestion that other animals offer models for us to follow in this respect appears in Cicero's account of social development (*Fin.* 3.62–3.63 = LS 57 F(1–2)). The idea that various kinds of animal can play an exemplary role ('the plants, the little sparrows', **5.1.2**) is repeated in **5.6.4–5.6.5**, also **11.20** (the elements, see Introd., text to n. 235).

A related Stoic (and Epicurean) motif was the 'cradle argument', according to which we can establish the goal of human (or animal) life by looking at infant behaviour. This argument was used to support both the Epicurean belief that the goal of life was pleasure and the Stoic one that the goal was to maintain one's constitution as a human being (compare Cic. *Fin.* 1.30 (= LS 21 A(2)), 3.16, Sen. *Ep.* 121.6–121.15 (= LS 57 B); also Brunschwig 1986). Marcus seems to allude to this motif, or at least the complex of ideas linked with it. He imagines himself (or his 'occurrent', rather than 'normative', self, see Long 2009: 26–9), saying it is 'more pleasant' to stay in bed (**5.1.2**). The 'normative self' replies by dismissing the Epicurean view of what is natural to us ('So were you born for pleasure') and advocates the Stoic view that it is natural to desire to maintain one's human constitution, and to do so in 'action' rather than 'feeling'. Marcus

assumes a rather crude picture of Epicurean hedonism here, linked with eating and drinking, as well as staying in bed, 'beyond what is enough', **5.1.4**, contrast *Ep. Men.* 131–2 = LS 21 B(5). Marcus also alludes to a further theme linked with this complex of ideas, namely that humans and other animals are animated by 'self-love', interpreted by Stoicism and Antiochus (first-century BC Academic thinker) as meaning the desire to fulfil the best aspects of one's nature (Cic. *Fin.* 3.16, 5.24–5.27). Thus, Marcus suggests, the reason you do not act properly is that 'you do not love yourself' i.e. 'your nature and its intention' (*boulēma*) (**5.1.5**).

Marcus closes his self-urging by comparing himself (or his 'occurrent' self) with those who are passionately devoted to 'types of expertise' or 'craft' (*technē*), including some ironically chosen exemplars, the 'miser' and 'celebrity' (*kenodoxos*), literally, 'lover of empty fame' or 'glory'), **5.1.6**. The idea of virtue, or a properly conducted human life, as a 'craft' or 'expertise' is a favourite Socratic–Platonic idea also adopted by Stoicism (compare LS 64, esp. H, and Sellars 2003). So the interconnections suggested here between the human function, *oikeiōsis*, and virtue (here, 'actions for the common good') seen as a type of expertise are natural ones to make in Stoic thought (see also **4.31**, **6.16**, **6.35**).

5.2 This brief comment expresses the recurrent theme in *Med.* that emotions depend on judgements and thus that we can achieve peace of mind or 'calm' (*galēnē*, compare **12.22**) by 'wiping away' (contrast 'colouring' or 'dyeing' in **5.16.2**) disturbing impressions (*phantasiai*). The term 'alien' (*anoikeion*), compare **3.7.4**, may be another allusion to Stoic thinking on development as *oikeiōsis*, see note on **5.1**. For what such judgements may be and how they can be removed to achieve peace of mind, see **4.3**; for the idea of removing passions by 'examining impressions', see Epict. *Diss.* 3.2.3, 5, *Ench.* 1, 5. On the Stoic theory of emotions and *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 130–4.

5.3 This chapter offers a straightforward formulation of one of Marcus' regular themes; that he needs to rely on his own judgement about the worth of his own actions and words and not on 'any subsequent criticism or talk' from other people (**5.3.1**); compare **2.6**, **2.8**, **4.12**. I have not followed the emendation of *hē apakolothousa* (literally, 'which follows') to *ei epakolouthēsei* ('if it follows') in Dalfen 1987. The norm to be relied on is his own judgement about what is 'in line with nature' (i.e. the Stoic goal of life); if he does this, this gives the best hope that his own (*idia*) and the 'common'

(*koinē*) nature will coincide, **5.3.2**. The latter contrast is sometimes used in Stoic thought to denote 'human' and 'cosmic' (e.g. D. L. 7.88–7.89 (= LS 63 C(3, 5)). But here the contrast seems to be between Marcus' own judgement and objective or normative (human) 'nature', as in the preceding clause ('the others have their own ruling centres (*hēgemonikon*) and follow their own motives (*hormai*). The image of the 'path' (**5.3.2**) to convey the project of on-going ethical improvement (see Introd., text to n. 83), especially the idea of following a 'straight' path, is one Marcus finds especially suggestive; compare **4.18**, **4.51**, **7.55.1**, **7.55.6**, **10.12**.

5.4 This short chapter also starts with the idea of life as a journey—or, rather, it seems, as two kinds of journey. One is the journey of one's biological life lasting 'until I fall down and take my rest'; the earlier phases of this journey are vividly reviewed in the sources of generation and nutrition mentioned in the rest of the chapter. A second journey, implicit but crucial for Marcus' reflection, is acceptance of the first kind of journey, from birth to death, as an integral part of the cycle of nature. The idea of one's end as dispersal into the elements (especially earth and air) is one of the ways in which Marcus, following Stoic ideas, conceives death (compare note on **3.3.6**). But here, as elsewhere, he conveys the idea of acceptance of one's life and death as integral parts of the natural cycle not just with resignation but with poetic lyricism and a kind of joy (compare **4.23**, **4.48.4**). Some of the ideas suggested are traditional, rather than Stoic (e.g. 'mother earth', the idea of the father as contributing the seed and the mother the blood). But Marcus weaves these motifs into a, typically Stoic, acceptance of one's life as part of nature as a whole (compare **2.3**).

5.5 This chapter starts from a rather unusual point: Marcus' acknowledgement (presumably sincere) of lack of 'mental acuity' (**5.5.1**), compare 'being rather slow and weak of understanding . . . your own dullness' (**5.5.5**). The closest parallel is Marcus' acknowledgement of his limitations in examining in depth physics, and logic, as well as ethics, although that motif has its own—at last partly—distinct significance (see note on **1.17.22**, also **7.67.3**, **8.1.1–8.1.2**, and Introd., text to n. 17). But it becomes clear that this is only a prelude to a different, and more ethical, point: that, even if Marcus— or anyone—has intellectual limitations, he can and should offer 'what is wholly up to you' (**5.5.2**), that is, to exert every effort in achieving and expressing the virtues and avoiding the vices (**5.5.4**). Hence, Marcus' dialogue with himself (including his imagined response, 'I have no gift for that', **5.5.1**) takes on the character, again, of an exchange between

his 'occurrent' and 'normative' self' (see further Long 2009: 26–9 and note on **5.1**).

The idea that, even if we lack other special gifts, we all have the capacity to exercise the ethical virtues also appears in Cic. *Off.* 1.121 (as part of the exposition of the four-*personae* theory, 1.107–1.121). Both passages presuppose the central Stoic claim that 'all human beings have the starting-points of virtue' (Stob. 2.65.8 = LS 61 L, my trans., see further Introd., text to nn. 80–2). This chapter also evokes Epictetan formulations of this idea: 'up to you' (*epi soi*, **5.5.2**), 'are you compelled?' (**5.5.4**), compare Epict. *Ench.* 1, *Diss.* 1.1.10–1.1.13. The lists of good and bad qualities (**5.5.2, 5.5.4**) are quite varied and the vices especially are colourful; they go beyond the more standard list of virtues found in **3.11.3**, for instance. The set of good qualities (presented in the form of neuter adjectives) evokes the kind of itemization we find in the character sketches of Book 1. As there, the good qualities are sometimes formulated with Marcus' characteristic use of the 'alpha privative', e.g. 'indifference to pleasure' (*aphilēdonon*) (see further Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 1–2). The bad qualities are couched as infinitives (governed by 'compelled'); the first two terms are especially striking and unusual, 'to grumble (*gonguzein*), to be stingy (*glischreuesthai*)'. The good and bad qualities sometimes match each other, e.g. 'acceptance of one's fate' and 'grumble' or 'blame your poor body'. There is no reason to think either list is especially autobiographical (unlike—perhaps—the acknowledgements of limited intellect). They represent ways in which Marcus underlines for himself what is in fact a quite general, and standard Stoic, message.

5.6 The main explanatory context for this chapter is Stoic thinking about doing favours (Latin, *beneficia*), especially the attitude of the person doing the favour. Marcus stresses that, in the best case, the person doing the favour should not be conscious of the fact that he is doing a favour, even though it is appropriate for the person receiving the favour to be aware of this. Compare Sen. *Ben.* 2.6.2, 10.3; see also **1.8.7, 7.73, 9.42.11–9.42.13**. Marcus brings home this point to himself by the opening three-fold distinction between ethical grades of person or attitude (**5.6.1–5.6.3**). He also compares the best kind of attitude to an animal's instinctive performance of an action, even a vegetable process ('like a vine . . . like a horse'), or to quasi-automatic behaviour ('goes on to the next action', **5.6.4**); for life as a succession of such actions, see **6.7, 12.29.3**. (I have not followed Dalfen 1987 in his transposition of the words 'like a horse . . . honey'; my reading follows Trannoy 1953.)

Marcus also reinforces this point by an imagined dialogue with someone who responds that 'it is characteristic (*idion*) of a social being to perceive that he is acting sociably, and . . . to want his neighbour to perceive it too' (**5.6.6**). (There is some uncertainly about how to set out and punctuate this dialogue; my reading follows Dalfen 1987.) Marcus, perhaps surprisingly, concedes this claim ('What you say is true', **5.6.7**); but adds the qualification that misinterpretation of his point can lead to the kind of (relatively) defective attitudes shown by the first two people in **5.6.1–5.6.2** ('one of the people I mentioned before', **5.6.8**). The ideal attitude, it would seem, is someone who does the right act for its own sake, in a quasi-instinctive or automatic way. But the person involved may also be aware that this act is characteristic of a sociable person, and that it is appropriate for the person benefited to perceive this—though this awareness should not provide the motivation for the performance of the action. Marcus ends by emphasizing that, if one engages with 'the real meaning' of his point, it will be clear that his analysis will not lead anyone to 'neglect any socially beneficial act'.

Overall, this is a perceptive and subtle chapter, bringing out Marcus' interest in the ethics of interpersonal relationships (a feature evident in Book 1 too, e.g. **1.9, 1.10, 1.15–1.16**, but not always recognized in scholarship on *Med.*). On ethical motivation, and how to analyse this, see Annas 1993: 108–15 (centred on Aristotle but also relevant to Stoicism), Brennan 2005: chs. 11–13, esp. 210–11, 220–6 (on Stoicism).

5.7 The prayer cited seems to be a real one; it is set out in verse form in Farquharson 1944: 78. Marcus' meaning is not entirely clear. On the face of it, he is just saying we should pray 'in this direct and free style', i.e. in an open and straightforward way (see Rutherford 1989: 39). But elsewhere, Marcus takes the more moralistic view of prayer we also find in Epictetus (e.g. **9.40.5–9.40.7**, compare Epict. *Diss.* 1.16.18–1.16.21, see also main note on **1.17**). So here, 'directly' or 'simply' (*haplōs*) may mean 'not in a self-interested way' (compare Xen. *Mem.* 1.3.2), and 'freely' may be used in the Stoic sense of 'freedom', i.e. free from error and passion (Epict. *Diss.* 4.1 and Bobzien 1998: 338–44). So the point may be that the prayer is generalized, made on behalf of the Athenians as a whole and not just serving the interests of the individual worshipper. If so, this is very much Marcus' interpretation and not that of the original prayer, which was made by the Athenians as a whole and on their own behalf.

5.8 This chapter is an extended treatment of one of Marcus' favourite themes, the importance of accepting what happens, however bad it may

seem, as part of providential fate (see note on **2.3**, also van Ackeren 2011: 412–20). Although the chapter gives the impression that Marcus is working out the implications of this idea for himself, the position that he elaborates is wholly consistent with Stoic principles (see e.g. Epict. *Diss.* 2.6.9 = LS 58 J), even if it is rarely stressed as much in other sources as it is in *Med.* (see Frede 2003: 205).The core idea is that we should embrace whatever happens to any one of us *because* it forms part of the interconnected 'web' of events that is presupposed by Stoic thinking on universal causal determinism or Fate. Although he urges himself to regard what happens as in some sense appropriately prescribed for him, as an individual, it turns out that what he means is simply that he has a distinct, but integral, place within the causal web and should accept this fact. This claim is wholly in line with Stoic thinking; it is less questionable, as Stoic doctrine, than the claim in Cicero *ND* 2.164–2.167 that providential care extends to each of us as individuals (see main note on **1.17**, penultimate paragraph).

The first half of the chapter (**5.8.1–5.8.8**) centres on the idea that we should accept the events of our lives, whatever they are, in the same way as we would accept the guidance offered by the god of health, Asclepius. The latter's advice was given especially by means of dreams to those sleeping overnight in Asclepius' temple; this forms a central theme in the *Sacred Discourses* of Marcus' contemporary, Aelius Aristides (117–*c*.181, see Rutherford 1989: 199–200). However, despite this analogy, Marcus repeatedly makes it plain that he is not presupposing that providential care is directed to us as individuals. (In this respect, the reference to what 'completely un-philosophical people understand' by 'that was sent to him' in **5.8.5** is rather misleading.) What Marcus does (three times) is urge himself to view the fulfilment of the total web of events (or Fate) in the same way as people normally view the achievement of their own health.

In **5.8.3–5.8.4**, he does so by using the analogy between bricks ('squared blocks') and buildings, bodies within the universe, and individual causes within the 'one cause that is fate'. The common element is that all these are cases where the component factors play their proper role if and only if they make up a 'particular structured arrangement' (*sunthesis*). He reinforces the linkage by a verbal point; *sumbainein* can mean 'happen' or 'fit; the translation of this term by 'these happenings fit' is designed to bring out this combination of ideas (**5.8.3**). (On Marcus' interest in the significance of lexical ambivalences of this kind, see Giavatto 2008: 98–9.) In **5.8.9–5.8.11**, he restates the message of **5.8.1–5.8.8**: that he should 'welcome everything that happens, even if it seems rather cruel [to him] because it leads . . . towards the health of the universe' (**5.8.10**). He reassures himself that such

things would not happen to him unless they did indeed 'benefit the whole' and thus were, in this sense, 'appropriate for what is governed by that nature' (**5.8.11**) (i.e. for any component part of the totality').

In **5.8.12**, Marcus adds a further, though related, point: that 'what happens . . . stands in a special relation to you'. Here, Marcus uses a technical term in Stoic logic, *pōs echōn*, being 'relatively disposed' to convey the idea (as Chrysippus put it) that 'the parts of the world are not complete because they are disposed in certain ways relative to the whole' (Plu. *Mor.* 1054E–F (= LS 29 D), see further LS vol. 1: 178), compare, perhaps, **5.8.2** 'as being in some sense (*pōs*) appropriate for his destiny'. This is repeated as the idea 'that what comes to us individually is a cause of the well-being . . . of that which governs the whole'. (I do not follow Dalfen 1987 in deleting 'that which comes to each of us individually', even though these words do not occur in some manuscripts.) Although this point is presented as an additional one, it only serves to reinforce the idea of self-subordination to the whole of which one is a part, an idea spelled out again in the final sentence, which compares the whole to a body (compare 'mutilated') which Marcus will damage simply by being 'discontented' with his role within it (**5.8.13**).

5.9 This chapter centres on an idea that is important for most ancient ethical theories, including Stoicism. This is that virtue, when fully developed, is not a matter of forcing yourself to act rightly, but of full-hearted engagement, and a state of character that brings with it pleasure or joy (see further Annas 1993: 53–66, Graver 2008: 48–60.). Marcus begins by urging himself not to be discouraged, or to display other negative emotions, if his attempt to act 'according to right principles . . . is not completely consolidated' (*katapuknoutai*), a term used by Epicurus in connection with the 'condensation' of pleasure (D. L. 10.142 = Epicur. *KD* 9), but applied in this passage to the formation of virtuous character and attitudes (**5.9.1**). Here, as elsewhere, Marcus presents philosophy as his teacher and guide (**2.17.3**); as in **6.12**, he encourages himself to view philosophy positively, as medical treatment but also as 'a source of relief' (**5.9.2**). (On philosophy as therapy for the emotions, a pervasive notion in Hellenistic-Roman thought, see also **3.8.1**, **3.13**, compare Nussbaum 1994, Tieleman 2003: ch. 4, Gill 2010a: ch. 5.)

Marcus reminds himself that philosophy only wants what his nature wants, that is to live 'in accordance with nature' (the Stoic conception of the goal of life, LS 63 A–C), **5.9.3**. He also suggests that 'nothing can be more attractive than this' ('this' meaning living in accordance with nature).

The term for 'attractive' (*prosēnes*) is another favourite Epicurean word (e.g. Plu. *Mor.* 786C, 1122E); and Marcus goes on to challenge the attractiveness of pleasure, which the Epicureans saw as the goal of life (LS 21). But this does not mean denying the importance of 'attractiveness'—or more generally the affective dimension—in virtue. Marcus' claim is that the virtues and their intellectual base ('wisdom', here *phronēsis*) are inherently attractive to someone who possesses them. His description of these qualities evokes Stoic characterizations of the mental state of the wise person ('secure', *eptaistos*, compare D. L. 7.46–7.48 = LS 31 B) and of happiness ('smooth flow', *eurhoia*, of life, LS 63 A).

5.10 This is one of a number of chapters in *Med.* where a seemingly negative or pessimistic picture of human life (or death or transience) is juxtaposed, explicitly or implicitly—here explicitly—to Marcus' core project of self-improvement (see further Introd., text to nn. 140–56). The preceding review of negative facts is impressionistic, moving rapidly between categories. But the common threads are change ('subject to change', **5.10.2**, 'flux of being and time', **5.10.5**) and low character ('rent-boy', etc., and 'characters of your associates' [and 'oneself'], **5.10.3–5.10.4**), with 'short-lived and cheap' (**5.10.3**) forming a kind of lateral link between these two ideas.

The chapter begins, unusually, with epistemology, referring to the Sceptical view that things cannot 'be grasped with certainty at all' (*akatalēpta*) as well as the Stoic view that they are 'hard to grasp with certainty' (*duskatalēpta*), **5.10.1**. Marcus refers also to the Stoic idea that we gain knowledge by giving 'assent' (*sunkatathesis*) to impressions and alludes to the view that only the wise person is not 'subject to change' in his knowledge (**5.10.2**). See LS 41; also 68–70 on Scepticism. Marcus' unusual use of the term 'the Stoics' (as though he were not one) may reflect the fact that did not engage very deeply with Stoic logic (including epistemology), and presents it as subordinate to ethics (see note on **1.17.22**; also **7.67.3**).

The distinction between 'things' or 'realities' (*pragmata*, **5.10.1**), and 'objects of sensation' (*hupokeimena*, **5.10.3**) seems to be quite generalized and un-doctrinal. In Stoic theory, as for Aristotle, *to hupokeimenon* is 'substrate' or 'substance', which may mean concrete individual (LS 28, esp. E–F); but Marcus does not seem to have this sense in mind here, but just sensible or material objects. This leads on by a lateral link (noted earlier) to persons of low ethical character ('rent-boy', etc.) and then to Marcus' own associates, and finally Marcus himself (**5.10.4**). 'Rent-boy' is *kinaidos* ('catamite' or 'effeminate'); for the negative tone, see **6.34**, also **1.16.7**, **1.17.11**. There is little indication what features are being criticized or

rejected; but 'filth and fog and . . . flux' (**5.10.5**) suggest a—rather vague—linkage between transience or changeability and lack of moral depth or stability.

The contrasting positives are familiar ones in *Med.*: death as a 'natural release' (**5.10.6**, compare **5.33.5**), providential fate ('nothing will happen to me which is not in line with the whole), and moral autonomy ('within my power . . . no one can force'). It is not explicit here that Marcus takes forward his moral progress by coming to terms with the negative facts reviewed earlier (this is explicit in **6.47**, **12.3**); but this may be implied.

5.11 This short chapter represents another version of the dialogue (between 'occurrent' and 'normative' selves, see Long 2009: 26–9), in which Marcus challenges himself to live up the standards he sets himself. The question how he should 'use' his mind is one he poses elsewhere (compare **10.24**, **12.33**); here as elsewhere, he deploys a number of psychological terms, including *psuchē*, 'soul', *hēgemonikon*, 'ruling centre', *nous*, 'mind', without seeming to differentiate them in meaning. The call to question and examine himself has both Socratic and Epictetan echoes (compare Pl. *Apol.* 38a and Epict. *Ench.* 1); for the process of self-questioning, see also **8.2**, **10.37**. The questions posed here are ironic or bitter, implying that Marcus is failing to live up to the best standards of human nature, which he often presents as normative. Elsewhere, Marcus urges himself to behave 'as suits a Roman and a man (*anēr*)' (**2.5.1**), and as a 'statesman, a Roman, and a ruler' (**3.5.2**) (see further Introd., text to nn. 119–22). So the examples here imply he is falling well below these standards: 'child, adolescent, mere woman (*gunaikarion*, belittling use of diminutive), a tyrant, a domestic animal, a wild beast'. The list may also evoke the Stoic aspiration to play one's social role (*persona/prosōpon*) and conduct one's stage of life in an ethically informed way (compare Cic. *Off.* 1.107–1.124, esp. 1.122–1.223 on different ages, and Epict. *Diss.* 1.2, 2.10).

5.12 This is a rather curious chapter, in which Marcus, in a somewhat heavy-handed way, uses a coarsely worded proverb to support the claim that people in general recognize a distinction between meanings of 'good' stressed in Stoic theory. The proverb to which he refers is quoted by Menander ('the comic poet', 344/3–292/1 BC): it is about someone who is so 'well-provided with good things (*agatha*) that he has no room left to shit' (Menander, *Phasma*, 'The Ghost', Sandbach 1972: fr. 42), **5.12.2**, **5.12.4**.

Marcus initially appeals to the proverb to highlight the distinction between what Stoics understand by 'goods' (i.e. the virtues, 'wisdom', etc.)

and what 'the mass of people' mean (i.e. material and social goods). (For the contrast, see LS 58 and Introd., text to nn. 87, 91–6, 104, also **6.14**, **6.16**.) If you hold the virtues in mind, he says, you will see that the verses 'would not fit' this picture of what 'good' means, whereas the verses are appropriate if you hold in mind what most people mean by good (esp. material goods) (**5.12.1–5.12.2**). (I do not follow Dalfen 1987 in his emendation of the words translated here as 'the verses about the man "who is so well-endowed with good things"—they would not fit'; and I adopt the text found in Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953.) Marcus' claim seems reasonable if he means that you will respond to the proverb in that way if you are already familiar with, and accept, the distinction between senses of 'good' to which he refers.

However, he then goes on to claim that 'even the mass of people form a picture of the difference', and that this explains why the comment 'would be rejected' if taken as referring to the virtues, but would be taken as 'a fitting and witty comment' if applied to material things (**5.12.3**). His final comment seems to suggest that no-one (including 'the mass of people') could quote the proverb, with its coarse punch-line, and still 'value and regard as good' the things described as 'good' there (**5.12.4**). In other words, Marcus claims that the proverb can help anyone (a) see the difference between the two kinds of good and (b) recognize that the goods described in the proverb are not really goods at all. Also, he implies at least that the impact of the proverb and the comic quotation depend on this recognition.

These claims seem highly implausible. Marcus comes over as out of touch with conventional social thinking, as he reflects rather ponderously on these lines in his study. However, his claims do reflect the fact that Stoic ethical doctrines are meant to correspond to what people actually believe, even if they do not always recognize this fact, and that all people are presented as constitutively capable of forming a correct understanding of what 'good' means. See LS 60 B–E, esp. E (= Epict. *Diss.* 3.3.2–3.3.4); also Inwood 2005: ch. 10.

5.13 The main point of this chapter seems to be to stress the idea that he, Marcus, like everything else, is part of a process of change which is infinite in its duration; the theme that Marcus is part of a larger whole is a recurrent one in *Med.* (compare **2.3**). He begins with the distinction between 'causal' and 'material', which is his regular version of the standard Stoic contrast between 'active' and 'passive' causes in the universe (compare **4.21.5**, **7.29.5**, LS 44, and Sedley 2012: 398–9). These causes are

operative on everything in the universe, and their interaction gives rise to endless change in the universe, another recurrent theme in *Med.* (see **2.17.1–2.17.2**, **6.15**). Marcus underlines that he himself ('every part of me', **5.13.2**) is an integral part of this process, and that it will go on 'to infinity', just as it went back 'to infinity' (**5.13.2–513.3**). Even if, as most Stoics maintained, there are repeated cosmic cycles (compare **5.32.2**, **9.28.1**, and LS 52), Marcus points out that these go on to infinity (**5.13.4**). Marcus' comments here seem to be based on the Stoic idea that time is infinite, while the universe is finite in extent but placed in infinite void (in **5.13.2**, I think that 'to infinity' refers to time and not place within the universe); see LS 51 B, 49 D–H.

5.14 Marcus' focus here on rational self-sufficiency builds on a number of central, distinctive features of Stoic ethics, which are stressed also by Epictetus (compare *Diss.* 1.1 and 11.1). The idea that rational capacities 'activate themselves (*hormasthai*) from their own specific starting-point (*oikeia archē*)' and work towards their own goal (*telos*) evokes the Stoic idea that every human being as a rational animal is constitutively capable of developing (through *oikeiōsis*) to the perfection of the wise person (LS 61 K–M, 57 A, 59 D). The wise person's 'perfectly correct acts' (normally *katorthōmata*, here *katorthōseis*), compare LS 59 K–M, 'signal' (*sēmainein*) the correct path for us to follow in this process, by offering a normative pattern for us to aim at. Marcus suggests these acts are so named because they 'put us right' (*katorthoun*), i.e. on the right path; for the idea of ethical life as a 'path', compare **5.3.2**, and for Marcus' interest in significant or 'speaking' names (an idea sometimes expressed by the term *sēmainein*), see Giavatto 2008: 98–100.

5.15 This is a rather laboured chapter in which Marcus seems to be constructing an argument with no very clear point and to be repeating the phrases 'human being', 'human nature', 'good', without explaining what he means by them. The salient underlying theme, though not made explicit, is the standard Stoic contrast between what is really good (i.e. for human beings, virtue) and 'indifferents' (health, wealth, and so on, LS 58). The opening sentences (**5.15.1–5.15.3**) seem to be directed at the idea that we should not give any attention to 'indifferents' *because* doing so is not constitutive of our human nature as rational and ethical agents. Securing indifferents does not enable us to achieve what is good (virtue) and which 'constitutes' (or completely fills up, *sumplērōtikon*) the goal of life (i.e. the life according to nature). (I do not follow Dalfen 1987 in his deletion of

'the good' (*to agathon*) in **5.15.3**.) On Marcus' use of 'human nature' as a normative idea, see e.g. **4.49.4–4.49.6**, **8.1.6**; also LS 63 D–E.

In the second half of the chapter, Marcus supports this view by arguing that if 'indifferents' were indeed good, then we would not praise or regard as good someone who 'fails to take his fair share of them' or puts up with being deprived of them. But, he claims, we do; and the more someone does so, the better he is (**5.15.5**). Marcus does not make it plain whether he is referring to conventional or Stoic standards; it is presumably the latter, though he would assume that these match the best standards in ordinary society too (compare note on **5.12**). This view of what constitutes good character is, strikingly, different from an Aristotelian ethical framework; for Aristotle, the person who 'fails to take his fair share' of external goods is (defectively) 'humble' (*mikropsuchos*), *EN* 1125a17–1125a27. But also, it is not part of standard Stoic ethics to claim that someone is ethically better simply because he deprives himself of 'indifferents'. On the face of it, this passage seems to evoke the view of the unorthodox Stoic, Aristo, who defined 'the end' as being 'to live with a disposition of indifference towards what is intermediate between vice and virtue' (D. L. 7.160 = LS 58 G). Also, here as elsewhere, Marcus shows little interest in the standard Stoic notion (which Aristo rejected) of 'preferred' and 'dispreferred' indifferents. However, it is difficult to be sure whether what is involved in such cases, as in Epictetus too, is a doctrinal stance or just an emphatically moralistic one, though the latter seems to me more likely (see further Introd., text to nn. 91–7).

5.16 This chapter is couched in an exceptionally syllogistic style (compare **4.4.1–4.4.2**), and for an analysis of the forms of argument deployed, see Giavatto 2008: 47–50, 2012a: 415–16. Marcus' reflections here seem to be closer than usual to what was, as far as we can tell, the typical mode of Stoic treatises of the Hellenistic period (see e.g. LS 54 D–G). Cicero's presentation of Stoic ideas on social *oikeiōsis* (which is the main topic here) also has a strongly syllogistic style (**3.62–3.68** = LS 57 F), and Marcus may have drawn directly on Cicero's account and been influenced by its style.

Marcus begins with the idea that the 'mind' (*dianoia*) or 'character' (*psuchē*) is 'coloured' or 'dyed' by its most frequent 'impressions' (*phantasiai*) (see **6.30.1**, for this image); he then sets out to colour his mind with a connected series of ideas (which is what is meant by 'sequence of impressions', **5.16.1–5.16.2**). The syllogisms he offers himself all relate to distinctive features of Stoic thinking about social *oikeiōsis*. The first is that (since 'all human beings have the starting-point of virtue', LS 61 L, my

trans.) we are not prevented from living well by any given social context (see Gill 2006: 256–7, Graver 2008: 151–3). Hence, it is possible to live well even at court (where he lives). Marcus assumes the corrupting influence of power, to which he also alludes in **6.30.1** ('turned into a Caesar, or stained with the purple'); see also his positive comments on the way Antoninus avoided adopting a monarchical lifestyle at court (**1.17.5**).

The second point is also fundamental to Stoic thinking on *oikeiōsis*, both personal and social, namely that animals, including human beings, are naturally drawn towards the goal or good of their own constitution (i.e. ethical development is not imposed on them by social constraints, see Introd., text to nn. 80–2). The other-benefiting instinct is presented as in-built in animal nature; in human beings this develops naturally into a desire to engage constructively in social life ('community', *koinōnia*). Compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.62–4 (= LS 57 F(1–4), Plu. *Mor.* 1038 B (= LS 57 E). The comment that 'it has long been proved that we were born for community' (**5.16.4**) probably refers simply to the fact that these ideas form part of longstanding Stoic theory. As in Stoic theory, as presented elsewhere, the themes of personal and social *oikeiōsis* are also linked in **5.16.5** with a *scala naturae*, according to which human rationality is taken to legitimate human superiority', compare D. L. 7.85–7.86 (= LS 57 A(4–5)) and Cic. *Fin.* 3.67 (= LS 57 F(5–6)).

5.17 The linkage between a person's (ethical) character at any one time and the way she acts at that time is a theme stressed in Stoic theory on determinism and responsibility (see e.g. Gel. 7.2.6–7.2.13 (= LS 62 D), also LS 62 C); it co-exists with the belief that all people are in principle capable of becoming virtuous (see note on **5.16**). Marcus refers to this linkage often: see **4.6.1, 5.28, 9.42.1**, also Epict. *Diss.* 2.20.18.

The phraseology here is pointed (with effective use of the repeated 'impossible) and may carry rather more resonance than is obvious. 'Madness' (*manikon*) and 'bad' (*phauloi*) are terms applied to the non-wise in Stoic thought (i.e. virtually all of us). 'To pursue the impossible' may imply treating 'indifferents' as intrinsic objects of choice, by contrast with virtue which is both 'up to us' and the only proper object of choice. Hence, the comment describes with mordant brevity a pervasive feature of human behaviour.

5.18: 'nothing happens to anyone' (**5.18.1**). The thought that creatures (of various kinds) are naturally capable of bearing what happens to them recurs elsewhere in *Med.*, and seems to be linked with a belief in natural

providentiality (compare **8.46**, **10.3**). Marcus goes on to point out two possible reasons for endurance: ignorance (presumably, failure to grasp the extent of what has gone wrong) and 'strength of mind' (*megalophrosunē*), **5.18.2**. This virtue is one stressed by Marcus (e.g. **3.11.2**, **10.11.1**) and is presented by Cicero as replacing, or identical with, courage in the four cardinal virtues (*Off.* 1.61–1.92); for an expression of the kind of 'strong-minded' response Marcus may have in mind, see **5.8**. The concluding comment (**5.18.3**) does not follow from what has just been said and is uncharacteristically cynical. Perhaps Marcus was thinking that *it would be* strange (or 'terrible', *deinon*) if ignorance were stronger than wisdom (*phronēsis*), though it is expressed here as a fact.

5.19 The independence of one's mind (here, *psuchē*) or capacity for judge-ment is a repeated theme in *Med.*, e.g. **2.15**, **4.3.10–4.3.11**, **4.7**. Despite initial appearances, the point is not about subjectivity of judgement, and is not primarily epistemological or psychological at all. Marcus (like Epictetus, e.g. *Ench.* 1) underlines that the judgements we make about things 'presented' to our minds (*prosuphestōta*) are 'up to us' and depend on what judgements we 'regard as worthy' to make about them (the verb is *kataxioō*, suggesting a link with 'value', *axia*). Implied here, but explicit elsewhere, is that such judgements relate especially to the difference in value between virtue (which is up to us) and 'indifferents' (which are not). The slightly clumsy translation of the second sentence with repeated use of 'it' matches the Greek (this actually has repeated use of *heautē*, 'itself', which is difficult to render in English). Marcus' phrasing is designed to underline that the mind *itself* has the kind of autonomy ascribed to it.

5.20 This chapter restates one of the most common themes in *Med.*, our moral autonomy as agents, but combined here with a special focus on the implications for interpersonal relationships. Marcus begins by summa-rizing the (rather delicate) balance regarding other people presupposed in Stoic ethics: that we are naturally inclined to benefit others, but that our own capacity for virtue and happiness does not depend on them, and, hence, they cannot obstruct our own progress towards virtue (**5.20.1–5.20.2**, compare **2.1**, **3.4**). These points are developed in language that is, to an unusual degree, laden with technical Stoic connotations. For instance, 'closest' (*oikeiotaton*, **5.20.1**) evokes social *oikeiōsis*; 'matters of indifference' (*adiaphora*, **5.20.2**), the first usage of this term in *Med.*, though implied in **3.11.5**, **4.39.3**, see also **6.32** and **9.1.8–9.1.9**; and wishing 'with reservation' (*hupairexis*, **5.20.2**, compare **4.1.2**). The final sentence (**5.20.3**) combines

images of counteracting impediment or blockage with Marcus' character-istic picture of the ethical life as a path or 'way'.

This combination of the themes of the agent's moral autonomy and proper conduct of interpersonal relationships also evokes Epictetus' treat-ment of these ideas (e.g. *Diss.* 3.3.5–3.3.9). For the idea that such works of practical ethics seem designed to explore the interface between personal and social ethical development (understood as *oikeiōsis*), see Gill 2000: 608–11, 613–14, and Introd., text to nn. 106–9.

5.21 The idea of an analogy between god or Zeus (as the 'highest power in the universe') and our reason or mind ('the highest power in us') is a standard theme in Stoicism and figures strongly in D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 A(3–4)), a passage (or at least a set of ideas) to which Marcus refers often. In Stoic theory, god and rationality are 'the same in kind' (*homogenes*, **5.21.2**) in that they are equally manifestations of the 'active' cause in the universe (compare D. L. 7.134–7.136 (= LS 44 B, 46 B)). The features of the analogy stressed here are the ideas that we should 'respect' or 'honour' both powers, and that each of them 'use' other things and 'direct' them. As often, Marcus' ideas and language evoke Epictetus, e.g. the god within, *Diss.* 2.8.12–2.8.13 (compare Long 2002: 165–6), the mind as 'the highest power' in us, *Diss.* 2.12.22, mind as 'using' other things, *Diss.* 2.23.6. For some indications of what this kind of 'respect' may involve, in both cases, see **5.26, 5.27**.

5.22 In this chapter, Marcus combines two of his regular themes. One is that what matters is the whole or collective, normally the universe (e.g. **2.3**) but here the community or city (*polis*), which seems to be the actual, rather than cosmic, city. The important thing, then, is what harms the city rather than the individual citizens or Marcus himself; and if the city is harmed its members are also harmed. (Marcus seems to be using 'harm' in a conven-tional sense, setting aside the Socratic and Stoic principle that you can only harm yourself, by acting wrongly (e.g. **2.1**.) The second theme is that anger is never an appropriate response to wrongdoing; instead, you should point out the error to the wrongdoer. For this theme, see **5.28**; and for avoidance of anger on the ground that all wrongdoing is involuntary and based on error, compare **2.1.3–2.1.5, 11.18.4–11.18.6**, Epict. *Diss.* 1.28; also Long 2002: 250–4, Gill 2006: 451–2. So even if the city as a whole is harmed, anger is not justified.

5.23 This chapter offers a characteristic expression of human, and cosmic, transience, together with a pungent statement on the intended emotional or

moral effect of contemplating this transience. The features stressed here
are the speed of change (**5.23.1**), the constancy of the flow of change,
affecting all existence (*ousia*), activities, and causes, so that 'hardly anything
stands still, even what is near to us' (**5.23.2**); I do not adopt the additional
phrase supplied by Dalfen 1987 after 'near to us'. Finally, Marcus refers to
the infinity of time, past, and future. These features are presented here as
designed to counteract both pride or self-importance and types of distress
('agonized or aggravated') as one recognizes the relative shortness of one's
life (**5.23.3**). In the final phrase I do not adopt the deletion of 'for any period
of time' (*en tini chronō(i)*) by Dalfen 1987; I take it, here as in **6.36.1**, that
even the present period is swallowed up in the vanishing infinity of time. In
4.3, some of these ideas (speed of change and infinity of time) are presented
as enabling Marcus to cleanse himself from 'distress' and 'resentment'
(**4.3.3**), and to counteract 'the trivial desire for fame' (**4.3.7**). For similar
reflections, see **3.10**, transience of time and fame, **4.43**, time as a river.

5.24 This chapter restates the theme of **5.23**. Characteristic features here
are the idea of a 'hairsbreadth' amount of time (*akariaion*), an unusual word
but favoured by Marcus, e.g. **2.14.3**, **3.10.1**; life as a mere 'interval'
(*diastēma*), e.g. **3.7.3**, **4.50.3**. The idea of life as a small part of 'fate' only
occurs here; Marcus may be picking up the word-play sometimes noted by
others between *meros* ('part') and *moira* (here, *heimarmenē*, 'fate' (compare
Pl. *Prt.* 322a, Epict. *Diss.* 1.12.26); the idea is consistent with his usual view
of himself as part of the larger web of fate.

5.25. This chapter combines two characteristic themes. The first is that
your agency (also virtue and happiness) does not depend on others but on
you yourself; therefore if someone 'wrongs' you (*hamartanei*), this will
harm him rather than you (**5.25.1**); compare **2.1**, **2.6**, **2.8**. This idea is under-
lined here by the repeated use of 'his own' or 'private' (*idios*). The second
sentence makes two further points. The first is 'I have what universal
nature wants me to have' (**5.25.2**). This seems to mean that what Marcus
experiences is determined by 'universal' or 'common' (*koinē*) nature, i.e.
providential fate, and not, by inference, by the actions of the people who
have 'wronged' him, except in so far as those actions are part of his fate. Of
course, this is true for anyone, but Marcus is unusual in recognizing this
fact. Marcus adds that 'I do what my nature wants me to do now'. This
partly restates the first point that Marcus, like everyone, has responsibility
for his own actions. But the implication, suggested by the coupling of
'universal' and 'my' nature, is that he is expressing, or at least trying to

express, the kind of nature that universal nature wants him to have, i.e. normative (ethical) human nature, compare **5.15**. For the combination of these two ideas, articulated more fully, see **4.26, 11.13**.

5.26 The first sentence here (like **2.2**) might seem at first glance to presuppose a quasi-Platonic mind-body dualism. Marcus urges himself to ensure that the 'ruling and sovereign part of your soul' (the *hēgemonikon*) is unaffected by 'smooth or rough movements' (pleasure and pain) in the flesh and that it 'restricts those experiences (*peiseis*, more commonly *pathē*) to the [bodily] parts affected' (**5.26.1**). However, the second sentence makes it plain that Marcus presupposes the standard Stoic view, namely psychophysical monism or holism. He recognizes that the experiences will 'communicate themselves to the mind by virtue of that other sympathy, as is bound to happen in a unified body' (**5.26.2**). The phrase 'other sympathy' seems to denote the internal communication of the sensation of pleasure of pain from the relevant part of the body to the mind; it is 'other' in the sense that it is not initiated by the 'ruling centre' or 'mind', unlike most of the other psychological processes described in the chapter. On internal communication in Stoic psychology, see LS 53 B, esp. (5–9), G(7–9), H. For passages indicating psychophysical holism elsewhere in *Med.*, see **7.67.1, 10.36.6–10.36.7, 12.3**.

Thus, it is clear that Marcus is presupposing the normal Stoic view that rational agency (of the kind referred to as 'circumscribes itself', **5.26.1**, and 'does not add its own further judgement' (**5.26.2**)) is a function of the human being, or rational animal, as a psychophysical whole. He may also have in mind the Stoic idea of 'pre-emotions' (*propatheiai*), according to which instinctive reactions (like the 'experiences' cited here) do not become full-scale emotions without the assent of the mind of judgements about good or bad. For 'pre-emotions', see LS 65 U–V, Y (= Epict. *Diss.* fr. 9), Sen. *Ira* 2.3.1–2.3.2, 2.3.4; also Graver 2008: ch. 4. See further on this passage Gill 2007b: 199–200; on psychology in *Med.*, see Introd., text to nn. 183–211.

5.27 The idea of living 'with the gods' is rather unusual in *Med.*; the closest parallel is 'being a member of the community (*sumpoliteuesthai*) of gods and humans' (**10.1.4**); compare the idea of the world as a community shared by gods and humans (Cic. *Fin.* 3.64 (= LS 57 F(3))). The opening sentence ('Live with the gods') is sometimes presented as a quotation, though no source has been suggested. In any case, the remainder of the chapter seems intended to explain in Stoic terms what it would mean to 'live with the

gods'. Marcus explains this phrase in terms of two ideas which are standardly associated with fate in Stoic thought. One is accepting fate as providentially designed ('shows his mind content with what is assigned to it'), compare Epict. *Diss*. 2.6.9 (= LS 58 J), an idea Marcus especially stresses. The other is ensuring that you act as your 'mind and reason' wants (i.e. exercising rational agency); the directing mind is also identified with 'the guardian spirit (*daimōn*), which Zeus has given each person, as a fragment (*apospasma*) of himself'. Both these images for the mind are based on Stoic teachings (compare D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(4)), and **7.143**). The first image occurs frequently in *Med*; the latter is used only here, though we find 'offshoot' (*aporrhoia*) used similarly in **2.4.2**. On Marcus' thinking on fate in general, see note on **2.3**, Introd., text to nn. 226–32.

5.28 Most of the themes dealt with here are familiar ones in *Med*. These are: the need to respond to those who offend us not with anger but with instruction (compare **5.22.2**, **9.42.1–9.42.7**); the necessary linkage between character (here, physical tendencies) and behaviour (compare **4.6.1**, **12.16**.); the idea that we all possess, and should use, rationality to guide our actions (compare **5.27**). The use of imagined dialogue (between the 'occurrent' and 'normative' selves) is also standard.

  More unusual is the focus on bodily features such as 'stale sweat', the 'armpit', and 'smells'. This may reflect the quasi-Cynic strand of bluntness sometimes found in *Med*., which forms one of the ways in which Marcus 'strips' things to their ethical essentials (see further Introd., text to nn. 99–103, 153–4). Marcus' selection of these features, along with his accompanying advice, may be a way of underlining that such things, taken on their own, are 'matters of indifference' (LS 58), even though there are right and wrong ways of responding to them. The final phrase ('Neither a play-actor nor a prostitute', **5.28.4**) is more puzzling. Although some attempts have been made to link it with the preceding chapter, it seems to be a comment whose significance escapes us; perhaps it was intended as the start of another line of thought, which was interrupted and never completed.

5.29 The main point made in this chapter is a reassertion of a fundamental principle of Stoic ethics: that all human beings are constitutively capable of acting in line with their nature as rational and social animals or creatures (i.e. to aim to progress towards virtue), whatever the circumstances. In that sense, Marcus reminds himself that he is 'free' and that no one prevents him doing as he (or his nature) wishes (**5.29.2**, compare LS 61 K–L, Epict. *Diss*. 1.1. The coupling 'rational and social' is common in *Med*., see **3.7.4**,

6.44.5; also Reydams–Schils 2012b: 442–5). Here as elsewhere, Marcus presents suicide as an option, if circumstances make it impossible to leave such as life. 'If they [presumably, the gods, as agents of providential fate] do not allow this [living well], then leave life'. This attitude to suicide is standard in Stoic ethics, compare LS 66 G–H, LS vol. 1: 428–9, also Epict. *Diss.* 1.25.18, 4.10.27, whose image Marcus adopts here: 'The fire smokes and I leave the room' (**5.29.1**).

The opening sentence is quite unexpected: 'You can live your life here and now in the way you intend to live once you have left life.' Marcus seems to assume continuity of consciousness and identity after death in a way that is not standard in Stoicism, though Stoic views on post-mortem existence were quite open (see note on **3.3.6**). However, survival for some time after death is considered as a possibility in Stoic thought, even for non-wise people (LS 53 W). Marcus refers to this possibility elsewhere (compare **7.32**, 'change of place' (*metastasis*), **8.25.4**, 'change its place and be stationed elsewhere', **11.3.1** 'continue its existence', *summeinai*); and here he seems to give this idea fuller content.

5.30 Here, perhaps, picking up the final phrase 'rational and sociable creature' in **5.29.2**, Marcus states that 'the mind of the whole [i.e. nature] is sociable' (**5.30.1**). This is supported by claiming that nature has created a structure in which the inferior (i.e. plants and animals) exist for the sake of the superior (i.e. gods and humans, who share rationality) and has created 'harmony' (usually 'community', *koinōnia* in *Med.*) between them. For the idea that there is this kind of natural structure, compare **5.16.3–5.16.5**, **7.55.2**, though without the further claim that this means that the mind of the whole is sociable. The natural structure described is very close to that in Cic. *Fin.* 3.64, 67 (= LS 57 F(3, 5)). Nature's providential care is presented in *Fin.* 3.62–3.67 as expressed in human and animal sociability, but relating to a broader range of features, including parental love in animals and humans, and sociability among all humans, than are mentioned here.

5.31 'How have you behaved till now . . .?', (**5.31.1**). The retrospective stance throughout this chapter, reviewing his life, evokes the theme of *Med.* Book 1 (which Marcus has perhaps begun to think about, see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 6–7). He cites the kind of figures he comments on in Book 1, though here his thoughts fall on what he has done for them rather than on how they have shaped his ethical development. In reviewing his behaviour towards them, he cites a Homeric line, from memory and not quite accurately (*Od.* 4.690): 'do no evil, speak no evil'. Homer's Odysseus

perhaps came to mind because he spends three books narrating part of his life (his journey so far), in *Od.* Books 9–12.

The reminder of Odysseus may also help to suggest some of the motifs stressed here, for instance, 'strength to endure' evokes the character of 'much-enduring' (*polutlas*) Odysseus, while Odysseus also displayed great emotional self-control on his return home (Books 17–21) ('how many pleasures and pains you have ignored' (**5.31.3**). It may not be accidental too that Odysseus, along with Heracles, was considered as a possible candidate for the Stoic wise person. On the other hand, the behaviour and attitudes that Marcus ascribes to himself are much more in line with the ethical norms towards which he urges himself throughout *Med.* than with those on which Homer shows Odysseus acting. Odysseus' slaughter of the suitors in revenge in Book 23, for instance, is very far from acting kindly to unkind people (for this norm, see **2.1**).

5.32 Underlying this short, slightly puzzling, chapter seems to be a contrast between ignorant people (who may still achieve success in practical situations) and experts who have a broader and theoretically based understanding. This is a contrast underlined by Plato (*R.* 486a and *Tht.* 173c–174a); Marcus alludes to both Platonic passages elsewhere (see note on **2.13**; also **7.35**), and Marcus may have them in mind here. He begins by asking why the ignorant 'baffle' or 'throw into confusion' (*suncheousin*) someone with 'expertise and knowledge' (**5.33.1**). He answers his own question with another, and defines knowledge in terms that stress theoretical understanding (**5.33.2**).

The second answer is couched in strongly Stoic terms: the person with knowledge is defined as someone (presumably, the normative wise person), who understands how reality is pervaded from beginning to end by reason (i.e. the divine active, providential principle seen as shaping everything) including the 'fixed cycles' of eternal recurrence. See LS 44 A, 46 A–B, 52. The term used for 'governs' is here *oikonomein* (rather than *dioikein*, Marcus' usual term, see D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3)), though *oikonomia* in *Med.* tends normally to have practical connotations (e.g. **4.19.2, 4.51.2**). So it seems that Marcus answers his original question (about the relative success of the ignorant) by suggesting that down-to-earth, if uninformed, people often triumph in practical situations over those with a broader, more philosophical, understanding of things. Of course, as Marcus must know, the Stoic wise person is also regularly characterized as someone who can apply wisdom effectively in practical contexts (thus by-passing the recurrent Platonic-Aristotelian contrast between practical and theoretical

wisdom); see LS 61 G and 67 W–X. But this is not the aspect of Stoic wisdom Marcus chooses to underline here.

5.33 This is one of a number of chapters in which Marcus couples a highly negative picture of human existence, often stressing transience, with a more positive conclusion, focused on the scope for ethical agency (Introd., text to nn. 140–57). A dominant theme, here as elsewhere, is the emptiness of fame ('just a name or no name, and a name is just sound and echo', **5.33.1**, 'a good reputation in such circumstances is empty' (**5.33.4**, on this as a standard theme in *Med.*, see **4.3.7–4.3.8**). This treatment of the theme is especially vivid and mordant in phraseology, both in the presentation of familiar motifs and more exceptional ones. This applies to the (rather familiar) description of human physicality and transience, e.g. 'ashes or a skeleton' (**5.33.1**, compare **4.48.3**); 'our poor little soul is a fine spray (or 'exhalation', *anathumiasis*, **5.33.4**), of blood' (for this type of psychological vocabulary, see note on **2.2**). More unusual is the use of poetic-type imagery ('puppies snapping at each other, children squabbling', **5.33.2**), followed by a line from Hesiod's *Works and Days* (197), describing the flight from humanity of deified virtues (Marcus adds 'Justice and Truth to Hesiod's 'Trust' and Respect'. Also exceptional is the stress on the unreliability of sense-impressions, **5.33.4**, evoking Sceptical, rather than Stoic, views (LS 68–9).

Despite this vivid sequence of negative features, the chapter ends with a characteristic set of positive recommendations. These consist in waiting for death ('extinction or a change of condition', see note on **5.29**) 'with a good grace' or 'cheerfully' (**5.33.4**). This is combined with a simple set of ethical messages: 'to worship the gods and do good to human beings, and to show tolerance and restraint' (**5.33.5**, for the second theme, see Epict. 2.22.20, 4.8.20). The final sentence marks, in Epictetus' style again, the contrast between ethical responses of this kind, which are 'up to us', and 'what lies within the limits of mere flesh (*krea(i)dion*, a belittling diminutive) and breath', that is, the kind of transient physicality stressed earlier in the chapter (compare Epict. 1.3.3, 5, 1.20.17–1.20.18). (I do not adopt the emendation of 'within' to 'outside' by Dalfen 1987 in **5.33.6**.)

5.34 This quite short chapter formulates certain core Stoic ethical ideas in a way typical of *Med.* and strongly informed by Epictetus. The first sentence is based on the Stoic principle that virtue (here, following the 'right path', *euodein*, compare **6.17.2**) is a sufficient basis for happiness or 'a smooth flow in your life' (*eurhoein*), compare LS 63 A. The second sentence indicates

part of the underlying rationale for this claim. Human beings, who are (like gods) rational animals (compare LS 63 D) are naturally constituted to find their good (happiness) in 'in a just disposition and action and to make this the limit of one's desire'. (I follow Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953 in reading *dikaikē(i)*, 'inclined to justice', rather than adopting the emendation 'sociable' in Dalfen 1987.) Also, no one can prevent you, as a rational agent, from doing this, so this route to happiness is permanently available. Compare Epict. *Ench.* 2, *Diss.* 1.1.7–1.1.12, 1.4.1–1.4.5; LS 63.

5.35 The point of this short chapter is to underline that 'matters of indifference' do not constitute what is 'bad' in a real sense (LS 58). The question 'why am I troubled' (or 'make an issue about', *diapheromai*) seems designed to suggest the notion of 'indifferents' (*adiaphora*). Marcus use rhetorical questions ('why am I troubled . . . what harm is there?') to reinforce the idea that he should not be troubled by (i.e. regard as bad) anything that does not consist in, or result from, his wrongdoing or do harm to the 'common good' (presumably, that of the community, though perhaps also the good of the cosmos). He qualifies the second suggestion by reminding himself that the common good cannot be harmed by his wrongdoing. Compare **8.55**, where he points out that someone's wrongdoing does not harm the cosmos, and **6.44.2**, where the common good is presented as a product of divine providentiality. These parallels suggest that the 'common good' is cosmic; but I take it that the good in a community is also not harmed by individual wrongdoing (only the individual herself is harmed by this).

5.36 The inspiration for this chapter seems to be a passage in Epictetus (*Ench.* 16), where he says that it is right to help people who are upset about the loss of external goods and to talk to them sympathetically, but not to share their belief (or 'impression') that this loss constitutes real harm. This point is restated in the first sentence (**5.36.1**); the term 'things without inherent value' is literally 'intermediate' (*mesa*), between good and bad; for this usage, coupled with the same message, see also **3.11.5** (see further Introd., text to n. 107). The phrase 'bad habit', while a common one, may carry a special resonance here; to suppose that the harm is real is an ethical failing.

   The latter part of the chapter is more puzzling and the text is uncertain, especially in the words translated as 'so you should act on the stage' (**5.36.2**); I have followed Dalfen 1987 in his deletion of a phrase before 'on the stage'. However, it is clear that Marcus commends the attitude of an old man represented in a play who, when his foster-child was upset by the loss of his

top, 'went off' (the stage) to ask for it back, even though he was aware that it was just a top (i.e. something intrinsically unimportant). Marcus, it would seem, tells himself (or an imagined other) to act in the same way ('so you should act on the stage', i.e. if you were on the stage too). He criticizes his *alter ego* for forgetting the real value of the things that have been lost (by someone else) and being upset at their loss too ('Have you forgotten . . .'). The *alter ego* defends himself by saying that 'they mattered a lot to these people'; but Marcus replies that this is not a reason for him 'to be foolish', i.e. to treat 'indifferents' as goods and to be upset himself. The chapter is one of those in which Marcus explores the interface between personal and social *oikeiōsis* (and the values associated with each strand) (see Introd., text to nn. 106–9).

5.37 This chapter begins with a conventional comment about having good luck in the past; the sentence is sometimes put in quotation marks as an imagined comment by someone else to which Marcus responds. Having good luck (being *eumoiros*) is then explained as having a good character, good motives and actions. The idea that what determines our happiness is ethical character, rather than luck, is a longstanding ancient philosophical theme, and is a subject on which Stoicism takes a particularly strong and clear-cut position. In **4.49.2–4.49.6**, Marcus redefines 'good' luck as the ability to respond virtuously to external events, whatever these are. Elsewhere, however, he sometimes couples 'luck' with 'help of the gods' (**1.17.23**) or 'fate' (**3.11.4**), as external factors which affect our lives in ways we cannot determine.

Book 6

6.1 This chapter provides a brief statement of one of the fundamental doctrines of Stoic physics, that the universe is based on two principles, active and passive, (passive) the 'substance (*ousia*) of the whole' and (active) 'the reason directing this (*dioikōn logos*). Marcus' stress here falls on the idea that the passive element is 'compliant (*eupeithēs*) and adaptable', so that 'everything comes into being and reaches its end in line with it' (i.e. with this directing reason), **6.1.2**. The phrase 'compliant' (easy to persuade) may evoke the Platonic idea of reason 'persuading' necessity to make the universe as good as possible (*Ti.* 48a). However, here, and in Stoic physics generally, the passive element is seen as wholly pervaded and shaped, so there is no 'persuasion' of a recalcitrant material. Secondly, Marcus emphasizes the complete absence of wrongdoing or harm in the operation of directing reason, a point restated in three forms. Again, this theme figures prominently in Plato (*Ti.* 29e–30c) and is adopted systematically by Stoicism. One implication, only lightly suggested here, is that the death of a person (or anything) does not constitute injury or harm, let alone some kind of cosmic or divine malice ('nor is anything injured by it . . . Everything . . . reaches its end in line with it'). See LS 44 B–C, 46 A–B, 54 A, K; also Sedley 2012: 398–9 (on *Med.* and Stoic physics); Sedley 2007: 113–27 on Plato's *Timaeus* (esp. reason and necessity); Sedley 2002 and Gill 2006: 16–20 on Plato's *Timaeus* and the Stoic world-view.

6.2 Marcus here treats a core principle of Stoic ethics (the contrast between virtue and 'matters of indifference', LS 58) in a way that brings out its significance for facing the looming prospect of one's own death. 'If you are acting appropriately' (i.e. doing *to prepon*, used here as a synonym for *to kathēkon*), external factors affecting our bodily or psychological state should be 'matters of indifference' (or should not 'trouble' us, *diapherou*, compare *diapheromai* in **5.35**). After considering relatively minor matters such as being 'cold or hot', Marcus focuses on the external factor normally

seen as wholly determining our well-being or its opposite, namely death. He stresses that this should be seen simply as 'one of the actions of our life'; so, in this respect too, 'it is enough 'to make good use of what the moment presents' (**6.2.2**), that is, to act 'appropriately'. In this sense, death is brought within the scope of our ethical agency. Compare **3.7.4**, **9.3.3**, on death as just another action and function of nature, and **7.68.3**, on dealing properly with 'the moment' as offering 'the material of virtue'. On *to prepon*, literally, the 'fitting', see **7.13.3** and Cic. *Off.* 1.94; on 'appropriate actions', see LS 59.

6.3 'Look within' suggests probing yourself to your ethical core, compare **9.27.1** (applied to other people). A related idea is 'stripping things naked': and the language used here evokes **3.11**, a full exploration of that motif. Compare 'the specific quality and value of any object' (**6.3**) and 'what sort of thing it is when stripped down to its essence' (**3.11.1**) and 'what value it has for the universe and the human beings' (**3.11.2**), see Introd., text to nn. 98–105. Thus, this comment is a brief reminder to maintain the focus on salient ethical values, setting other kinds of value aside.

6.4 This chapter begins by restating the theme of constant cosmic change (for the formulation of this idea here, compare **5.10.3**, **9.33**). Marcus then offers a very brief statement of the 'providence or atoms' disjunction, i.e. the opposition between the Stoic, unified, teleological world-view and the Epicurean, atomic, purpose-free, picture of the universe (compare LS 13 and 54, Introd., text to nn. 242–68). The Stoic alternative ('it will evaporate') refers to the belief by most Stoics in periodic conflagration of the entire universe (compare **10.7.5–10.7.6**, LS 46, 52 F). The Epicurean alternative ('it will be dispersed') refers to the dispersal of any given object into its component atoms during infinite time (LS 11 A–B). Here, Marcus makes no move to adjudicate between the alternatives or to draw out the implications for ethical life.

6.5 Marcus, making no reference to the disjunction in **6.4**, refers briefly to the Stoic world-view stated more fully in **6.1**. 'The directing reason', i.e. the active principle or god, 'knows its own disposition' (presumably, its providential and beneficent character), and 'what it does' (the purpose built into the unfolding nexus of events, or Fate) and 'on what material' (i.e. the passive principle or matter).

6.6 'The best kind of revenge is not to become like them' (i.e. those trying to harm you, or 'your enemies', in conventional terms). Marcus, here as

elsewhere (**2.1**, **5.22**, **5.25.1**, **5.28**, **11.18.11–11.18.13**, **11.18.16–11.18.18**) rejects the standard Greco-Roman ethic of retaliation for wrongdoing and urges himself to instruct those who have done him wrong. The idea that retaliation involves 'becoming like' your wrongdoer (and thus harming yourself) evokes some Platonic passages (*Tht.* 177a, *Lg.* 728b), compare Epict. *Diss.* 2.10.26. The paradoxical idea that not becoming like those who wish to harm you is itself a kind of retaliation is a distinctive feature of this passage. See further on relevant Stoic ideas Long 2002: 250–4 (on Epictetus), Gill 2006: 451–2.

6.7 Marcus urges himself to find joy and peace of mind in making his life a continuous sequence of other-benefiting or sociable acts and in keeping god in his thoughts. The second idea may evoke the acceptance of all events (including one's own death) as an integral part of divine providence, an idea linked with joyful acceptance elsewhere (compare **4.23**, and **6.31**, where he also uses the term, 'find rest', *anapauou*). It may also suggest that the sequence of sociable acts at which Marcus aims (compare **5.6.3–5.6.4**, **12.29.3**) helps to create the community of gods and humans seen as a normative ideal in Stoicism (Cic. *Fin.* 3.64 = LS 57 F(3)). He also presupposes the idea that 'good emotions' such as 'joy' (here, 'enjoy', *terpou*) are wholly compatible with virtue (see also LS 65 F and Introd., text to nn. 130–4).

6.8 This characterization of the 'ruling centre' or 'mind' (*hēgemonikon*), stressing at first self-activation and adding a series of forms of agency, may suggest initially the idea of the mind as the expression of the active cause and of 'directing' god in us (compare **3.6.2** and, on the active cause, **6.1**). However, its agency is then specified in terms of two, linked capacities, for self-adaptation and for 'making everything that happens appear to itself as it wants'. This suggests two themes much stressed elsewhere: our capacity for giving or withholding judgements, especially about what is good or bad, and to accept 'what happens', even seemingly bad things, as a product of providential fate. Compare **5.8.12–13**, **5.19**, **7.14**, and for a comparable set of characteristics ascribed to the rational mind (*psuchē*), see **11.1.1–11.1.2**.

6.9 The chapter begins with a familiar claim: that 'all things are carried out in accordance with the nature of the whole' (compare **6.1**). Marcus then adds, as a supporting point, that they could not be carried out in accordance with any other nature 'whether embracing the universe from outside or enclosed inside or attached outside'. The rationale for this further point is not quite clear. Presumably, he means that, if we assume the validity of

the Stoic world-view (that of a complete, self-sufficient, but finite universe), there is no other nature that could serve as the normative basis for everything that happens. His comment is not easily taken as providing an argument in support of the Stoic world-view, by contrast with the other views mentioned—since no such argument is offered. It is unclear whether the other views cited are simply hypothetical possibilities or meant to correspond to other ancient accounts. If the latter, he may have in mind, respectively, Aristotle's 'unmoved mover' (*Metaph.* 12.7), the Pythagorean view of the earth as revolving around a central hearth (DK 44 A16, 58 B37), and the demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus* (28c–29a, 29e–30c). However, in either case, the chapter seems designed to restate the linkage made in Stoic theory between a single (immanent) divine source of providential care and the conception of the universe as a unified whole. See LS 47 C, 54 A, B, F, H; and on Marcus' assumptions about the Stoic universe (as monistic and containing immanent divinity and purpose) and about what 'nature' means, see van Ackeren 2011: 361–77.

6.10 This chapter is (like **4.27** and **6.44**), one of the fuller treatments of the 'providence or atoms' theme in *Med.* (see Introd., text to nn. 242–68). Here, Marcus does not explicitly adopt the Stoic alternative; but his comments and phrasing consistently imply a preference for the Stoic world-view, and he considers the Epicurean world-view from a Stoic standpoint. Marcus does not attempt to examine the arguments for or against either cosmological theory, taken in its own terms; his concern is with the ethical implications of adopting one or other world-view.

The chapter begins with a strongly 'loaded' contrast between the Epicurean and Stoic accounts of the universe: 'a hotpotch (or 'stew', *kukeōn*), entanglement and dispersal, or unity, order, and providence' (**6.10.1**). The first phrase accentuates the Epicurean view that all entities are a product of the combination and dispersal (or recombination) of atoms in infinite void (LS 11 A–E). The second phrase focuses on the Stoic view that the universe is an organic whole, shaped and ordered providentially by an immanent active principle or directing god (compare **6.1**). Marcus assumes that, *because* the Epicurean view is not teleological (LS 13, contrast 54), it is therefore not based on any systematic principles and lacks any coherence; for a very different picture of the Epicurean theory, see Lucr. Books 1–2, and Sedley 1999a: 362–82. For a similarly partisan contrast between non-teleological and teleological views of nature in Marcus' time (though not one Marcus himself may have been aware of) see Gal. *Nat. Fac.* 1.12 (see further Gill 2010a: 66–71).

Marcus then considers (from a Stoic ethical standpoint) the implications of accepting the validity of the Epicurean world-view. The first comment ('why should I wish to spend time. . .', **6.10.2**) suggests that the Epicurean picture of the universe does not provide a basis for an ethical framework (the implied contrast is with the close ethics-physics linkage posited in Stoicism). He ignores the fact that Epicureanism does offer its own systematic ethical framework (LS 21), though one which is not linked in the same way with its account of physics (see Sedley 1998). He asks 'why should I care about anything other than how one day I shall "return to earth" ' **6.10.3**. The latter phrase refers to Hom. *Il.* 7.99, a passage also cited by Plutarch, *Mor.* 1105A, to illustrate human fear of extinction at death, a fear which Epicurus, according to Plutarch, does nothing to address. (I do not adopt the emendation in Dalfen 1987 to 'how one day my life will come to an end'.) Marcus at this point ignores the many Epicurean arguments that 'death is of no concern to me' (LS 24, esp. A(1) and E(1), see Warren 2004: chs. 1–2).

The following comments come closer to acknowledging these arguments: 'But why should that disturb me (*tarassomai*)? Dispersal will happen to me whatever I do', **6.10.4**. Here, Marcus does allude to the Epicurean claim that acceptance of the idea that death brings extinction (and dispersal of atoms) can help to bring about the Epicurean ethical goal of 'absence of disturbance' (*ataraxia*) or peace of mind (LS 24 and 21 B(1)). However, this response is then juxtaposed to a contrasting statement of the effect of adopting the Stoic world-view (**6.10.5**). This is presented as also providing psychological confidence: 'I . . . stand firm' (*eustathō*), for this term, compare **5.18.2** and Epict. *Diss*. 2.5.7. He also says, 'I revere [and have confidence in] the directing power' (*ho dioikōn*), which suggests, primarily, the providential god (compare **6.1**), but also, possibly, the directing power or ruling centre in us (compare **6.8**). Although there is no explicit concluding statement of preference between the competing world views, the second view is implicitly supported. The Stoic alternative is presented as offering a positive ethics–physics linkage (as a basis both for living and facing death) not accentuated in the Epicurean world-view (see the more positive presentation of the Stoic world-view in **6.10.1**). The concluding statement of the Stoic position seems designed to 'cap' the final point on the Epicurean view (**6.10.4–6.10.5**). Also, of course, the support offered for the Stoic view chimes with many points stressed elsewhere in *Med.*

6.11 Marcus here presents ethical life as an ongoing attempt to maintain a certain kind of 'harmony'. Although he may be 'forced' out of this harmony

by being, 'as it were' (*hoionei*), disturbed by external circumstances, he urges himself to 'return to himself', which is presented as identical with stepping back into his 'rhythm'. The qualification 'as it were' reflects the idea that being disturbed is an unnatural condition. Being 'master of' this harmony (Marcus uses the term, *enkrateia*, used by Aristotle to mean 'self-control' or 'self-restraint', *EN* 7.1, 1145a18) is achieved by trying to return to it 'constantly'. Here as elsewhere (**6.26**), Marcus presupposes the Stoic idea of virtue or happiness as a harmony (e.g. D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3)), Stob. 2.60.7–2.60.8, see Long 1996: ch. 9). Possibly, he interprets the 'rhythm' as equivalent for the virtue which is the core constituent of happiness, and 'harmony' as equivalent to this happiness (on the virtue-happiness relationship, see LS 63). The ideas of 'return to oneself' and perhaps also 'mastery of oneself' are interpreted here in terms of this project of aiming at harmony.

6.12 This chapter constitutes a rather exceptional attempt (outside Book 1) by Marcus to correlate philosophy and his role as emperor; see also **6.30** and **6.44.6**. These chapters, along with **6.48**, may have helped to suggest the idea of writing Book 1 (see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 6–7). From an external standpoint, his longstanding membership of the imperial family (during 138–80) might seem to constitute the centre of gravity in his life (see also Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 9–16). But here, Marcus makes it plain that, at least from the standpoint of *Med.* 2–12, philosophy is like a mother and the court a step-mother (i.e. a more formal or obligatory relationship); compare the guarded attitude to court life in **5.16.2, 8.9**. Marcus reinforces this point by using again the phrase 'constantly returning' employed at the end of **6.11** in connection with ethical life as a 'harmony', as well as the term 'find rest' (*anapauou*) used in **6.7** in connection with life as a sequence of sociable acts. The chapter also evokes other passages where philosophy is presented as providing the source of guidance or 'therapy' on which Marcus bases his continuing project of a reflectively informed ethical life. See e.g. **2.17.4, 3.13, 4.3.1–4.3.3, 5.9**. The final comment, that philosophy makes him 'bearable to your court' (as well as making the court bearable to him) is a rather unusual passage in that he considers the effect of his philosophically informed behaviour from the standpoint of other people, rather than his own.

6.13 The first part of this chapter (**6.13.1**) represents an extreme example of Marcus' occasional use of blunt—or disgusting—realism, which strongly evokes the Cynic technique of 'outspokenness' (*parrhēsia*, see Rutherford

1989: 143–7). Taken on their own, such passages may seem to express a (quasi–Platonic) rejection of physicality or even eccentric hatred of life. But Marcus makes it plain this is intended as a deliberate technique, either forming part of, or closely linked with, the 'analytic' or 'stripping' method illustrated earlier by reference to **3.11** (Introd., text to nn. 99–103). The aim, as he stresses here, is to get 'to the heart of things in themelves and 'penetrating them so you can see what they really are', compare 'show them naked', and 'strip away the story' (*historia*), i.e. the way such 'impressions' are conventionally understood (**6.13.2–6.13.3**).

In **3.11**, the focus of the 'analytic' method is on the positive ethical core which emerges when you 'strip' them down to their essentials, that is, on seeing each situation as giving scope for the expression of the virtues (compare **12.29**, and to some extent **11.2**, **11.16**). Here, and in some similar passages (**2.2**, **8.24**, **9.36**), the tone is more negative, as the stress falls on the purely physical dimension of objects or experiences normally viewed positively. However, the underlying objective of both kinds of passage is the same, namely for Marcus to bring home to himself the real (ethical) value of what is being described, and to promote an attitude of indifference to things that are morally 'indifferent' (see esp. **11.16** on the linkage between the analytic method and 'indifferents').

Here, Marcus invites himself to apply this method to luxurious food and drink ('roast meat and . . . Falernian wine'), the 'purple robe' (a toga edged with purple to mark high status), and 'sexual intercourse' (*sunousia*) (**6.13.1**). The aim of Marcus' re-description (in crudely physical language) is to counteract the positive connotations linked with these objects or experiences and the 'passions' (misguided emotions) they normally arouse. These passions depend on supposing things such as sensual pleasure and fame to be genuine 'good things'; and it is this kind of 'story' (*historia*), or ascription of value, that Marcus aims to retell (see Introd., text to nn. 130–4).

The chapter ends by addressing a more subtle case where 'pride is cheated by false reasoning', namely cases of self-deception 'when you are most convinced that you are engaged in worthwhile matters (*spoudaia*)' (**6.13.4**). The implied point is that Marcus has come to attach 'pride' (or 'self-importance', *tuphos*) to his own ethical virtue, and the activities which they give rise, instead of his social status. This is, presumably, the criticism made by the Cynic Crates (fourth–third century BC) of Xenocrates (head of the Platonic Academy 339–314 BC) who was noted for his exceptional lack of pride, in the ordinary sense (D. L. 4.11). So Marcus' 'stripping' method cuts rather deep, identifying a kind of vice (self-satisfaction at one's own virtue) not generally supposed to be part of ancient thought at all.

6.14 A rather standard move in Stoic theory is to use a statement of the *scala naturae* (spectrum of natural kinds) to support the idea that human beings, as rational animals, have capacities for agency and development towards virtue that differentiate them from other natural kinds, apart from gods. In this chapter, as in some others, Marcus seems, at first sight, to be making this move; on closer inspection, it becomes clear that he uses the *scala* for rather different purposes, which include contrasting the ethical level of different kinds of people or urging himself to make a certain kind of ethical response (see Introd., text to nn. 233–6).

Here, Marcus uses a version of the *scala* based on the degree of 'tension' in the *pneuma* which constitutes the active or 'sustaining' cause of different kinds of entity. The spectrum used here, as in Stoic theory generally, starts from inanimate objects ('minerals and timber) held together by 'physical cohesion' (*hexis*), and plants ('figs . . .') held together by 'natural growth' (*phusis*). These are described as 'the broadest categories of entities' because entities of the higher levels are also unified by the active cause that operates at the lower level. The higher levels are those of animate creatures (sustained by 'vitality' or 'animation', *psuchē*), 'such as flocks and herds', and then types of rationality, culminating in rationality exercised in ethical agency ('the mind in so far as it is rational and political'). Marcus uses the term *psuchē* both for 'vitality' and rational functions, translated here by 'mind'. 'Mind' is, in Stoic theory, a form of 'tension' which is expressed above all in the character-state (*diathesis*) of the wise person (an idea not specifically referred to here); see LS 47 M–S, and Long 1996: ch. 10.

Thus far, the chapter expresses standard Stoic ideas. More exceptional is the use of the spectrum to identify objects valued by different kinds of people, who are contrasted in terms of education or understanding: 'ordinary people . . . people of more medium level (*metriōteroi*) . . . yet more refined'. Some of the correlations seem rather artificial. Why should medium-level people value 'flocks and herds' rather than minerals and plants? Why should 'more refined' people value not just technical expertise but also 'the bare ownership of masses of slaves'? (Farquharson 1944: 686 repositions the latter phrase in the previous sentence, after 'flocks and herds'; but it does not work very well there either.) However, the concluding stage makes some sense of the whole sequence. At the highest level, a person recognizes the value of states of mind and activities that are 'political (or sociable) and rational', and, as a result 'no longer turns his attention to those other things' (**6.14.2**). In effect, the *scala naturae* is used as another way of bringing out the absolute value of virtue, by contrast with other kinds of object often valued ('indifferents'), and underlining the

importance of focusing one's life on this goal, an idea central to Stoic accounts of personal development as *oikeiōsis* (compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.20–3.25 (= LS 59 D(2–6); also Gill 2007b: 200–1).

6.15 This is another chapter in which Marcus dwells on human and cosmic transience, and raises the question of the significance of this fact for our beliefs about value, though he does not pursue this topic here (**6.15.2**). (I follow the text of this sentence adopted by Farquharson 1944, which transposes the phrase 'where it is impossible to stand', rather than the emendation of this phrase in Dalfen 1987.) For comparable stress on transience, eternity of change, and flow (a Heraclitean image), compare **6.15.1** with **4.36, 4.43, 5.23, 7.25, 12.23.3**. A new motif here is the comparison of attaching value to any specific object 'of those things that are rushing past' to being 'attracted to one of the sparrows that fly past' (**6.15.2**). The theme of discouraging attachment to specific objects (or people), as distinct from trying to act virtuously in relation to them, evokes Epictetus (e.g. *Ench.* 3).

Also striking, if not wholly exceptional, is the idea that 'the life of each of us' is as transient as 'the evaporation of our blood' (**6.15.3**, compare **5.33.4**) or 'a breath taken in from the atmosphere' (compare **5.4**, which also highlights the idea that our life is derived from nature as a whole, here, 'the source from which you first drew it', **6.15.4**). The reference to 'breath' leads Marcus to his final point, a comparison between breathing out (as we do every moment of our life) and dying (breathing out one last time). The point of the comparison seems to be partly to minimize the significance of death, presented as nothing more than one more act of breathing out. Also, Marcus underlines that in both cases we are giving back something we acquired (temporarily), a breath of air in one case and 'the whole capacity for respiration' in the other; both are being returned 'to the source from which you first drew it (i.e. the universe or 'the substance of the whole', **6.1**).

6.16 In this chapter, Marcus focuses on the question left open in **6.15.2**, what is truly 'valuable'; and answers it with a series of points evoking standard themes in *Med.* which reflect core features of Stoic ethics. He begins with a rather incomplete and 'loaded' version of the *scala naturae* (compare note on **6.14**), the aim of which is to suggest that value does not lie in any functions shared with plants or non-human animals. For a similar set of functions, described more neutrally, see **3.1.2**; for the puppet-image (compare Pl. *Lg.* 644d–645b) used in connection with motives, see e.g. **2.2.4, 3.16.2**. He then disposes of 'empty glory', for instance, by 'being clapped' (as emperors often were, on their arrival in a public space),

including the striking image of 'the clapping of tongues' (**6.16.2–6.16.4**, compare **4.3.7, 4.20**).

The answer Marcus offers is acting in line with 'our own proper constitution' (*kataskeuē*). He presents this as the aim of 'our practices and forms of expertise', a point reinforced by reference to other forms of expertise, which work to ensure that 'its product should be suited for the function for which it has been produced' (**6.16.4–6.14.5**). Marcus' phraseology could be seen as reflecting widely shared themes in ancient ethics, including the common Platonic idea of virtue as a skill and Aristotelian ideas about ethical life as directed at an overall goal and fulfilling the 'human function' (*EN* 1.1, 1.7). But he seems, in fact, to have in view two salient, and much-debated, features of Stoic ethics. One is the idea that virtue is a 'stochastic' or 'aiming' art (compare *stochazetai*, 'are directed', in **6.16.4**), whose aim is to be exercised well for its own sake, regardless of whether or not we succeed in obtaining primary natural goods ('indifferents') (compare LS 63 G, 64 A–J, esp. C(5–7)). The other is that the goal is living 'according to nature', understood as human nature which is also in accordance with nature as a whole (LS 63 A–D, see 'action in line with our proper constitution', **6.16.4**, compare **4.49.4–4.49.6, 5.1**).

Marcus develops the answer to his original question (about 'where value lies', **6.16.7**, compare **6.16.2**) by restating related key Stoic themes. One is that if you recognize the unique nature of this value, 'you will not try to get other things [i.e. 'indifferents] for yourself' (**6.16.7**, compare Cic. *Fin.* 3.20–3.22 (= LS 59 D(2–6)). A second theme is that you will in this way be free from the passions (misguided emotions) that derive from over-valuing 'indifferents' (see further Introd., text to nn. 130–4); Marcus adds to the usual passions 'to blame the gods often' (**6.16.8**). He concludes with the idea that, if you 'respect and value your own understanding' (i.e. use your reason in acting virtuously), you will make yourself pleasing (*arestos*) in your own eyes (i.e. achieve happiness, including the 'good emotions' such as joy, LS 65 F) which depend on virtue. Achieving this goal (happiness through virtue) is also explained in terms of being 'well harmonized (*euarmostos*) with human beings' (compare LS 57 F and Stob. 2.108.8 (11m), also **7.5.3**), and 'in concord (*sumphōnos*) with the gods' (**6.16.16**, compare D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3–4)).

6.17 The aim of this, slightly enigmatic, comment seems to be to contrast the regular movements of other bodies in the universe ('up, down, and in a circle', see **9.28.1**) with the 'path' or road' of virtue (a favourite metaphor in *Med.*). The latter is 'something more divine', perhaps because, as rational

(a property shared with the gods), it is self-directed but also goal-directed (compare **5.19**, **7.55.4**, **8.60**). Also, this path 'goes smoothly' (*euodei*), compare **5.8.10**, **7.53**, in itself and also in achieving happiness or 'a smooth flow of life' (LS 63 A), which is identical with living in accordance with the divine director of the universe (D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63 C(3–4)).

6.18 This chapter offers a different reason for regarding fame as without serious value (compare **6.16.2–616.3**). Marcus comments on 'how oddly they [people in general] behave', in not wanting to speak well of their own contemporaries and companions but attaching 'great importance to being well spoken of by future generations' whom they do not know (**6.18.1**). He compares this attitude to 'being aggrieved that earlier generations' do not praise you (**6.18.2**). This (allegedly) asymmetrical attitude towards the past (before our life) and the future (after our life) is also noted in Sen. *Ep.* 54.4–54.5, and in Cic. *Rep.* 6.23 (regarding fame, as here). Another kind of 'symmetry argument', designed to bring out our inconsistency in thinking about the period before life and after death is given a prominent place in Lucretius' (Epicurean) arguments against fear of death (Lucr. 3.832–3.842, 3.972–3.975, see further Warren 2004: ch. 3), and this may have stimulated the non-Epicurean versions of this point, including that in **6.18.2**.

6.19 This short passage is more artfully phrased than it may seem, with a chiastic word order (ABBA): 'hard for you to achieve . . . beyond human capacity . . . possible and suitable for human beings . . . within your reach'. What is indicated by this structure is an idea crucial for the Stoic theory of development as *oikeiōsis*, especially the individual strand (LS 59 D), namely that 'all human beings have the starting points of virtue' (LS 61 L, my trans.); the link with this theory is signalled by 'suitable' (*oikeion*), compare 'more suitable' (*oikeioteron*), in **8.12**. The underlying idea is that fulfilling the highest level of human nature (i.e. achieving complete virtue or 'wisdom') is within the potential of all human beings as such, and that this should form the ceiling of our aspirations, however 'hard to achieve' it seems to any given person.

6.20 This is another chapter in which Marcus explores the Stoic approach to interpersonal relations, according to which we should respond to wrong-doing with tolerance (or correction) rather than passions (see Introd., text to nn. 135–9, referring to Strawson's contrast between 'reactive' and 'objec-tive' attitudes, and **2.1**). Here, Marcus uses the way we normally deal with accidental, or at least not malicious, injuries in sport (he seems to mean

wrestling), as a model of interpersonal responses more generally. We exercise caution but adopt an attitude of 'good-natured tolerance' rather than enmity, **6.20.1**. (In the first sentence, I follow the text of Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953, rather than Dalfen 1987, in translating, 'charging forward, butted me with his head'.) Marcus urges himself to take the same approach 'in other areas of life', that is, to 'overlook many things' in those with whom we interact rather than 'suspecting . . . or hating them' (**6.20.2**).

6.21 This chapter has strong Socratic echoes. These include the idea the need for continuing search ('I am looking for', *zēteō*) for knowledge of truth on which to base one's life. The echoes also include the idea that since people go wrong by mistake, it is advantageous 'if someone can prove me wrong (*elenchein*, a favourite Socratic term)', and that people are harmed not by truth but by persisting in ignorance. See e.g. *Apol.* 21b–22e (on Socrates' search for truth); 30b–30d (on what constitutes 'harm') and 38a (for the idea that 'the unexamined life is not worth living'); also Pl. *Grg.* 458a, 470c (on readiness to be corrected to avoid error). On the significance of Socratic ideas of this type for Epictetus, see Long 2002: ch. 3, also note on **2.1**. On readiness to change one's mind if shown wrong, compare **4.12**, also **6.30**.

6.22 This chapter makes a brief, and rather impressionistic, statement of moral conviction. Marcus affirms that he does 'what is appropriate for me' (*kathēkon*, a key Stoic term, compare LS 59), and that 'other things do not distract me'. The potentially distracting things are 'either lifeless, irrational' (like the objects presented as at a low level of value in **6.14**) 'or have lost their way, and are ignorant of the right path' (i.e. types of people, though presented dismissively in the neuter case as if they were 'things'). The description of the people refers both to the much-used image in *Med.* of ethical life as a 'way' or 'path' and to the idea of wrongdoing as based on ignorance (see **6.21**). The passage as a whole thus combines a typically Stoic stress on the value of recognizing the overwhelming value of acting rightly (Cic. *Fin.* 3.20–3.22 = LS 59 D(2–6) (and not being 'distracted' by other things, e.g. 'indifferents') with insistence on the need for Marcus to express moral independence from other people (on this theme, compare **2.6, 2.8**).

6.23 Marcus here returns to the proper way of relating to 'irrational animals and objects and things in general' (**6.23.1**, compare **6.22**). He suggests that the possession of rationality makes it appropriate for us to treat other things 'with generosity of spirit (*megalophronōs*) and freedom of mind', which is a

more broad-minded and responsible attitude than we mostly find in other Stoic treatments of proper relations between humans and non-humans (e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 3.67 = LS 57(5), see further Sedley 2007: 231–8). The idea that our shared rationality underlies our motivation to 'treat [other human beings] in a sociable way' is a more familiar Stoic theme, implicit in Cic. *Fin.* 3.63–3.64 (= LS 57 F(2–3)) and explicit in Cic. *Off.* 1.11–1.12. Since this rationality is conceived as shared with gods (see LS 63 D), it is natural that Marcus follows by calling on the gods for help (**6.23.2**). The final point about doing this for 'three hours' applies, surely, to the attitude recommended in the whole chapter, not just the calling on the gods. It represents a version of the idea common in *Med.*, and Stoic thought generally, that what matters is not length of a life but its ethical quality (compare **3.7.3**, **4.50.3–4.50.4**, Cic. *Fin.* 3.46, 3.76).

6.24 Marcus here combines two of the standard themes in *Med.*: death as a leveller (compare **2.14.5–2.14.6, 3.3**) and 'providence or atoms' (see note on **6.10**). Regarding the second theme, there is no attempt to adjudicate between the two alternatives, namely the Stoic one, 'were taken into the same generative principles of the universe' (compare **4.14, 4.21.2**) and the Epicurean one ('were scattered equally into [constituent] atoms') (compare Lucr. 3.830–3.860 (LS 24 E(1–4)).

6.25 This chapter seems to have been inspired by Epictetus *Diss.* 1.14.7–1.14.10, which suggests that if we are capable of responding with our senses and mind to a vast number of 'impressions' (many at the same time), this helps us to understand how god can embrace the whole universe with his thoughts. Marcus eliminates the idea of god as an omniscient observer, a change which perhaps reflects his more typically Stoic and less distinctively 'personalist' conception of god (see further Long 2002: 142–7, van Ackeren 2011: 446). Marcus uses the analogy simply to help himself to grasp the idea of the plurality—or rather the totality—of events happening simultaneously in the universe. Unlike Dalfen 1987, I do not delete 'together' after 'physical and psychological' since this helps to underline the simultaneity of the events in us (as well as the universe) which Marcus stresses here. The idea that 'all the events in the . . . universe, exist at the same time' is rather odd. Perhaps Marcus had in mind the idea that all the events taking place at any given time in the universe constitute an inconceivably large number, though this is not quite how he puts it here. Recognizing how many occur in us at the same time would then serve as a bridge towards grasping this further—barely intelligible—plurality.

6.26 This is, on the face of it, a rather puzzling passage. However, it makes more sense if we recognize that here, as in **3.1.2**, Marcus is referring to the Stoic idea that virtue consists of a 'harmony' or complete set of notes or 'numbers' (see further Long 1996: ch. 9). As this idea is formulated here (**6.26.3**), 'every appropriate action', *kathēkon*) 'is a completed set of certain numbers'. Marcus also takes for granted a point made often elsewhere in *Med.*, that the proper way to respond to those who are angry (or who do you wrong) is not to be angry yourself (compare **2.1**), but to respond calmly, perhaps by correcting them (though the latter point is not mentioned here).

The linkage between these ideas is brought out by giving an example of a simple type of appropriate response, namely spelling out the letters of your name ('Antoninus', in the case of Marcus), if asked to do so. This response is described in a way that brings out the characteristics of a virtuous action. It is an action done in a calm and methodical way, that puts together the elements into a unified whole or harmony ('enumerate the letters . . . spelling each of them out in turn'), and does so calmly, rather than in an 'intense' [or high-pitched], way' (**6.26.1**). Long (1996: 212) suggests that the latter term (*enteinamenos*) evokes, by contrast, the Stoic idea of virtue as a harmony or 'good tension', *eutonia*. Analogously, if 'people are angry', the correct way to respond is not with reciprocal anger, but by an action that is 'appropriate', in putting together its component elements in a systematic way (**6.26.2–6.26.3**). Marcus does not specify here what that response should be; but whatever is done, it should consist in completing 'your project methodically', as in the spelling of the name.

6.27 This chapter reads as a sequel to the preceding one: Marcus discusses the point left unexplored in **6.26**, why indignation at other people is not an appropriate response, and what counts as a better alternative. He explains that being indignant amounts to preventing people from aiming 'at what appears to them to be suitable and beneficial to themselves', which is a natural human motive (**6.27.1–6.27.2**). He supplies an imagined riposte, that the people concerned are mistaken about what is beneficial ('But it is not so'), and replies that one should 'teach and show them' what is beneficial, rather than being indignant (**6.27.3**). This line of thought follows closely a number of passages in Epictetus; and the assumption that people's motives reflect their beliefs about what is 'beneficial' is standard in Stoic psychology. Compare Epict. *Diss.* 1.28.10, 2.22.15, 2.22.35, 2.26, *Ench.* 42; and Brennan 2003: 265–9.

6.28 This 'consolation' for death lacks the positive content sometimes found in other treatments of this theme in *Med.* (contrast, e.g. **5.4, 5.29**).

Death is viewed only as a 'relief' from psychological functions, all of which are characterized in rather negative terms, as quasi-automatic 'reacting' to sensations, being drawn 'like puppets' by our motives (compare **3.16.1–3.16.2**), and 'service to the flesh' (compare **3.3.6**); even rational activity is presented as 'twists and turns' or working things out (*diexodos*) of the intellect (*dianoia*). Marcus' phrasing is striking and pointed, including alliteration and metaphor; but the artistry seems only to underline the negative tone.

6.29 What Marcus envisages in **3.1** is the (involuntary) onset of senile dementia while the body is still operating adequately. Here, he seems to have in mind something more 'disgraceful', that his mind or character (*psuchē*) should 'give up the struggle' (*apaudan*) before the body does. The 'struggle', presumably, is that of trying to lead a worthwhile human life; hence, abandoning this aim while you still have a functioning body is criticized on ethical grounds.

6.30 This chapter is exceptional in combining a typical short meditation (**6.30.1–6.30.4**) with a longer, admiring character-sketch of Marcus' adoptive father, Antoninus (**6.30.5–6.30.15**). The first part is complete in itself, so that the latter part may seem to be an afterthought. However, the opening advice ('Take care you are not turned into a Caesar', **6.30.1**) forms a connecting thread between the two parts. The character-sketch of Antoninus is usually taken as having suggested the longer version in **1.16**; and this chapter, along with **6.48**, seems to have prompted the composition of Book 1 of *Med.* (see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 6–7). On the interplay between the two source of guidance cited here ('philosophy, **6.30.3**) and 'Antoninus' (**6.30.5**), see Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 10–16, and Gill 2012b: 45–52. Broadly, philosophy provides the conceptual framework for the way Marcus views ethical development and Antoninus provides specific, exemplary content, especially in helping Marcus to play his social role as emperor without being 'turned into a Caesar', that is, to combine proper performance of the role with still aiming to express the virtues (on Marcus' political ideals, see Introd., text to nn. 119–22).

The first part of the chapter (**30.1–30.4**) reads at first sight like a complete entry. It takes the typical form of aspirational self-urging towards achieving a 'normative' self. Marcus encourages himself to express a series of virtues, formulated as adjectives (**6.30.2**); here as elsewhere, 'philosophy' is taken as a guide for life (**6.30.3**, compare **2.17.4**); and Marcus states twice the linked ideals of respect for gods and caring for human beings (**6.30.4**, compare

5.33.6, 11.20.6). However, the first part also contains distinctive themes which are reflected in both parts of the chapter.

The opening advice provides the *leitmotif*: the unique expression 'take care you are not turned into a Caesar', glossed by not being 'stained' or 'dyed', suggests Marcus should avoid becoming a mere type ('Caesar' was one of the standard titles for the emperor or his intended successor) and being corrupted by the trappings of the role, instead of using it as a vehicle for ethical conduct (see further Introd., text to n. 122). The list of target qualities in **6.30.2** can all be seen, in different ways, as characteristics of a non-tyrannical ruler. See e.g. 'simple . . . sincere . . . unpretentious, a friend of justice . . . kind, affectionate (*philostorgos*)' (the importance of the latter quality is stressed in Book 1; see note on **1.11**, end of note). The combination of 'reverential towards the gods' and 'vigorous (or 'strong', *errōmenos*), in doing what is fitting)' matches the advice to combine piety and socially beneficial action and prefigures a combination stressed in the later part of the chapter; it also reflects features for which both emperors were noted in their own time.

In the second part (**6.30.5–6.30.15**), the striking instruction, 'In all things, act as a pupil of Antoninus' (**6.30.5**), marking a link with the Greco-Roman exemplary tradition (see further Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 17–28) frames the whole section. Syntactically, this part forms a single sentence, culminating in the final instruction ('so that your last hour may find you with as clear a conscience as his' (**6.30.15**). The exemplary qualities are set out in the same format as in Book 1: a series of good qualities (**6.30.5**), formulated as *to* plus neuter adjective, followed by short descriptive clauses ('how he did this or that', **6.30.6–6.30.14**) (see further Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 1–2).

The main focus in **6.30.5** is on qualities of character or temperament ('evenness of temper . . . serenity of his expression . . . sweetness of his character'). In **6.30.6–6.30.14**, although the list is not systematic, the main groupings are (1) qualities of intellect or understanding (**6.30.6–6.30.8**), (2) self-sufficiency and hard work in lifestyle (**6.30.9–6.30.11**), (3) good treatment of other people and respect for the gods (**6.30.12–6.30.14**). These groupings correspond broadly with three of the cardinal virtues recognized by Stoicism (LS 61 C–F, H, Cic. *Off.* 1): wisdom, self-control or moderation (*sōphrosunē*), and justice, though not courage (perhaps reflecting the fact that Antoninus' rule was marked by absence of major wars); on echoes of the Stoic characterization of dialectical virtue in **6.30.6–6.30.8**, see further Giavatto 2008: 80).

Most of the specific features cited in **6.30.5–6.30.14** match those in **1.16** (for a detailed correlation, see main note on **1.16**); two phrases found only

here are 'his piety' (**6.30.5**) and 'not anxious at every rumour, not suspicious' (**6.30.8**). A number of the qualities and features of behaviour listed here underline the presentation of Antoninus as a paradigm for 'not being turned into a Caesar' (**6.30.1**). These include 'the absence of vacuous pride' (**6.30.5**), 'how he put up with those who blamed him without justification, and did not blame them in return . . . how he refused to listen to malicious gossip' (**6.30.7**); 'how he tolerated frank opposition to his views and was pleased if someone showed him a better way' (**6.30.13**).

6.31 Marcus urges himself to 'Sober up', and shake off sleep; also to 'look at these things as you looked at those'. The point seems to be that things that 'disturb' us (and thus cause 'passions') are only illusory (in importance and value), like events in dreams. Thus, Marcus should look at 'these things' (things which in real life might disturb him)' just as he looked at 'those' things (dreams). Even when asleep, one does not view disturbing dreams in quite the same way as in real life; hence Marcus' use of the past tense, 'you looked' (*eblepes*). But now that Marcus is awake (I do not follow Dalfen 1987 in deleting the phrase, 'having woken up again'), he can recognize clearly that the disturbing events were just dreams; and this is the attitude he urges himself to adopt to disturbing events in real life. The phraseology of 'viewing' evokes the recurrent idea of 'stripping' things to their essentials (compare note on **6.13**). Also, drunkenness and sleep are favourite Heraclitean images for incomplete understanding (e.g. DK 22 A16, B1, B21, B26, B117), though Marcus does not seem to have a specific Heraclitean passage in mind.

6.32 In this chapter, Marcus links the notion of 'indifferents' (normally used in Stoicism in connection with ideas of value, LS 58) with the distinction between body and mind (*psuchē*), **6.33.1**, the latter further identified as 'intellect' (*dianoia*), **6.33.2**. The underlying aim is to specify things which are not 'indifferent', namely those things which fall within our scope as rational agents, which we can use as the material of ethical development. Marcus proceeds by eliminating from this class things only experienced as bodily; he uses a diminutive form ('the poor (or 'mere') body), to underline this low status. By contrast, he suggests, whatever forms part of the activity of the mind (or intellect) 'lies within its control' (or is 'up to it', *eph' hautē(i)*)); at least those things which fall within its scope in the present (on the contrast between the present and past or future as regards our agency, see **2.14**). Marcus' reflections here seem to be strongly inspired by Epictetus' standard distinction between what is and is not 'up to us' (e.g.

Ench. 1). It is not clear that Marcus' distinctions map precisely on to Stoic ethical psychology, according to which a function of reason is selecting between 'indifferents' (LS 58 B(3), C(4), D). But, as elsewhere, his main focus in such passages lies on what should matter most to us as ethical agents, rather than psychological entities (see further Introd., text to nn. 200–11).

6.33 In this chapter, Marcus advocates accepting 'exertion' or hard work (*ponos*) in situations where this is recognized as being required by the fulfilment of 'the work of a human being', and is therefore not 'bad', even if it may seem so, **6.33.2–6.33.3**. In the same way, he suggests, exertion in the hand or foot is not 'out of line with nature', as long as those limbs are doing their natural work, **6.33.1**. The passage turns on seeing that our conventional standpoint in life is analogous to that of a hand or foot, but that if we can go beyond this perspective, we will accept things such as exertion or pain as part of nature, as long as they are required to fulfil the ethical role of a human being. The passage may have been prompted by Epictetus, who suggests that, if we knew what was fated, we would accept it readily, just as 'my foot, if it had intelligence, would have an impulse to get muddy' (*Diss.* 2.6.9 (= LS 58 J)). Here, however, the acceptance is based on recognizing the hardship as 'in line with (human) nature', rather than as fated.

6.34 In this short comment, Marcus restates a point made more fully in **3.16**, that experiencing pleasure (in **3.16.2**, 'being drawn . . . by the puppet-strings of impulse') is shared with people of bad character such as those listed in both passages. In Plato's *Gorgias* (a favourite text for Epictetus, see Long 2002: 70–4), Socrates suggests that the fact that bad people have as much pleasure as good people is an argument against accepting that pleasure is the good. In that context, he uses the 'effeminate' ('catamite' or 'rent-boy', *kinaidos*) as a key exemplar for this point (494e–495a). Memory of Plato's argument may underlie Marcus' point in both passages, including his inclusion of the effeminate person in his list.

6.35 Marcus' use of the snobbish phrase (found also in Plato and Aristotle) 'common craftsmen' (*banausoi technitai*) is rather surprising, and perhaps too is his inclusion of 'the architect and the doctor' in the same group. Galen would not take this view, particularly regarding medicine, see *Protrepticus* (Kühn 1819–33) 1.28 and Boudon-Millot 2009. But Marcus' main point here, as in **5.1.6–5.1.7**, is to contrast such craftsmen favourably to

himself in the extent to which they hold to 'the principle of their expertise' and so to urge himself to higher standards of adherence. The idea of a distinctively 'human' expertise or 'work' is one Marcus uses often (e.g. **4.31**, **4.49.4–4.49.5**, **5.1.15**); this expertise consists in exercising the special human capacity for rationality 'shared by him with the gods' (**6.35.2**) in exercising agency in the development towards virtue. Marcus begins the chapter by commending the craftsmen because they 'accommodate themselves to laymen up to a point but still hold on to the principle of their expertise' (**6.35.1**). The analogue for this in his own case is, probably, providing other people with the 'indifferents', such as material benefits, that they expect (compare **3.11.5**, and Introd., text to n. 108), but doing so without losing sight of the contrast in value between virtue and indifferents that is fundamental to his 'human' expertise. (My translation follows the text of Farquharson 1944 and Trannoy 1953, rather than Dalfen 1987 in the first two words and the first word of the second sentence.)

6.36 This chapter offers a rather compressed statement of a number of standard themes in *Med.*, centred on the idea that we form a tiny part of a vast but providentially shaped whole (see note on **2.3**). Marcus begins by stressing the relative smallness of everything in the world (including Athos, a mountain and promontory in Northern Greece) compared with the vastness of the universe, the tiny 'point' of present time in relation to infinite time, the universality of transience (**6.36.1**, compare **3.10**, **4.3.7**). However, the aim is not just to promote a sense of insignificance but of being an integral part of a universe shaped by 'a shared ruling centre (*hēgemonikon*)' (or active cause, or providential god, **6.36.2**) 'All things come from there' and 'the source of all these things (**6.36.2**, **6.36.4**) also refer to this idea (compare **2.3.1–2.3.2**, **2.17.4**, LS 46 A–B, 54 A–B). This picture is qualified only by adding the (standard) Stoic point that apparently negative or defective features of the natural world count as a 'secondary effect' or as 'by-products' of this providential whole (compare **3.2**, **8.50**, and LS 55 Q(2), S(2)).

6.37 Here, as often elsewhere, Marcus comments on the essential sameness in things, despite the fact that 'what is present now' forms a brief moment in infinite time, as just stressed in **6.36.1**. This theme assumes the Stoic view of eternal recurrence (LS 52), though this idea is not mentioned here. Compare **2.14.5**, **4.32.1–4.32.2**, **6.46**.

6.38 The theme of the unity and the interconnection of things is a recurrent one in *Med.* This chapter is unusual, however, in its striking combination of

relatively technical with personal or affective vocabulary. The effect is to explain Marcus' often strongly emotive (and ethical) response to the unity of the universe as a providential whole (e.g. **2.16**, **4.4**, **4.23**) by reference to objective features analysed by Stoic physics. Thus, in **6.38.1** we have a combination of a technical term, 'interconnection' or 'concatenation' (*episundesis*), with 'relationship' (*schesis*), normally used in *Med.* for interpersonal relations (**8.27**, **11.18.1**). In **6.38.2**, the point is made more explicitly, that *because* 'all things are in a sense interwoven with each other, all things are *for that reason* dear (*phila*) to each other'. The aspects of Stoic physics referred to here are those of universal causal connection ('interwoven'), underlying the Stoic belief in determinism (LS 55 J–N), and the interpenetration and shaping of the universe by 'tensile movement and the common breath' (LS 47 H–R), thus creating 'unity' (*enōsis*).

6.39 The thought of this chapter seems closely related to that of **6.38**. The underlying assumption appears to be that, since Marcus finds himself in a situation which is the result of providential determinism, he has good reason to 'harmonize' himself (*sunharmoze*) to the circumstances 'in which your lot has placed you' (*sunekklērōsai*), and love (*phileō*, compare *phila* in **6.38.2**) 'the people among whom destiny has placed you' (*suneilēchas*). The linkage between these ideas is underlined by using the prefix *sun-* ('with') three times as part of the verbs. The further advice, 'but do so truly', stresses that this response must be genuine and in a sense heart-felt, though based on philosophical reflection (on Stoic thinking and *Med.* on emotions and interpersonal relations, see Introd., text to nn. 130–9). For a similar combination of ideas (accepting one's fate and also treating as 'brothers' those with whom one is linked by fate, see **3.11.4–3.11.5**, **3.16.3–3.16.4**, the latter passage also including the idea of 'harmonizing' oneself to fate.

6.40 The chapter begins by comparing natural entities with man-made instruments, but contrasting them in that with instruments 'the maker is separate from what is made' (**6.40.1**), whereas living things have an inner drive to fulfil their function. This view of natural teleology is common ground between Aristotle and Stoicism (see e.g. Arist. *Ph.* 199b28–199b31, *Metaph.* 1070a7–1070a9). However, unlike Aristotle, Stoics also see 'nature' as an in-built purposive force within the universe as a whole which in some sense embraces the 'natures' of everything within the universe. (At least, this is a common view of the relation between Aristotle and the Stoics, though a universal teleology is also ascribed to Aristotle by Sedley 2007: 194–203.)

Thus, here, in referring to 'the power that made them', **6.40.2**, Marcus seems to have in mind both the idea of 'nature' as a sustaining cause, and also that of universal (providential) nature (see LS 46 A–B, 47 C–H). Hence, we find here, as elsewhere in *Med.*, the idea of 'respecting' (*aideisthai*) or 'revering' this natural power (compare **12.28**). We also find the idea that if we act in line with the 'will' (*boulēma*) of the universe, this will also fulfil our own nature ('everything will be in line with your mind'), compare D. L. 7.88 (=LS 63 C (3)). The chapter ends by presenting this relationship between part and whole as a general feature in the universe: 'In the same way, in the universe, [all] its affairs are in line with its mind' (i.e. the mind of the whole, **6.40.3**) (I do not follow Dalfen 1987 in deleting the two final words in the chapter, 'its affairs'.)

6.41 This chapter states a key Epictetan theme, which Marcus also adopts elsewhere. This is that, if we regard as good or bad any of the things that 'fall outside our agency' (*aprohaireta*), i.e. 'indifferents' such as health and wealth, this will undermine our relationships as well as our value judgements. It will lead us to 'blame the gods or hate the people' who deprive us of these indifferents or who we suspect may do so. For similar ideas in Epictetus, see *Ench.* 1, *Diss.* 1.6.38–1.16.39, 1.27.11–1.27.13 (also Long 2002: ch. 8); compare **2.11.5–2.11.6**, **6.16.6–6.16.10**. On 'indifferents', see **6.41.1**: 'we often do wrong because we differentiate (*diaphora*) things on this basis'; compare **5.12, 5.19, 6.32, 11.10.4, 12.27.2**. This passage illustrates the close linkage drawn in Stoic practical ethics between personal and social *oikeiōsis* and the correlated ideas about value; see further Introd., text to nn. 106–9.

6.42 In this chapter, Marcus explores some new strands in one of his standard topics, the idea that we form integral parts of a single whole, the universe shaped by divine providence. First (**6.42.1**) he distinguishes between those, like himself, who are conscious of being 'workers and co-workers' in the universe and those who are not so conscious but who play this role in any case, since divine providentiality embraces their contribution. He cites a phrase from Heraclitus (DK 22 fr. B75, not attested elsewhere), in support of this idea; presumably, Heraclitus too sees such people as forming part of a single world-order which combines surface 'flux' with underlying rationality, even though they are 'asleep' and do not recognize this fact, see notes on **4.43, 4.46**.

Marcus adds that there is 'ample room' or 'abundance' (*periousia*) also for someone who 'criticizes' or 'tries to resist and destroy what is happening' (**6.42.2**, i.e. the kind of response rejected by Marcus in **6.41**), adding that

'the universe needs that kind of person too'. Stoic theorists accommodated in various ways the idea that human wrongdoing and (misguided) passions are compatible with a universe that, overall, is providential and beneficial to humanity. Cleanthes (head 262–232 BC) saw human wrongdoing as independent of divine will but subsequently woven into the overall plan (*Hymn to Zeus* = LS 54 I(3)). However, Chrysippus (head 232–206 BC) maintained that such things formed an integral part of the providential web of events (Plu. *Mor.* 1050 C–D = LS 54 T).

Marcus' comment in **6.42.2** seems to presuppose Chrysippus' approach, though the point added in **6.42.3** (whichever side you place yourself in, 'he who governs all things will use you well in any case') is compatible with either view. There may also be an echo of Cleanthes' view that Fate leads both those willing and unwilling to be led (Epict. *Ench.* 53, Sen. *Ep.* 107.10; see further Bobzien 1998: 346–9). However, Marcus ends by referring to Chrysippus' comment that, just as comedies can gain in charm by including some vulgar lines (Marcus' 'cheap and worthless verse', **6.42.4**), so the universe as a whole ensures that wickedness 'is not useless' (Plu. *Mor.* 1065 D = *SVF* 2.339). So it may be that Marcus assumes the Chrysippean approach throughout the chapter, even if he also alludes to Cleanthes' lines in **6.42.3**.

6.43 This short chapter develops one aspect of **6.42**, that different kinds of agents are 'working together to the same end', that is, fulfilling divine providence. The point is made by reference to different parts of the natural universe ('sun' and 'rain') and the gods who represent these: Asclepius is the god of healing and Ceres (Greek Demeter) is 'the goddess who brings the harvest'. In using these examples to illustrate his point, Marcus may be influenced by some standard Stoic ideas, for instance, that the traditional pantheon of gods represents a pre-theoretical version of the Stoic view of the natural universe as providentially ordered. He may also have in mind the belief that cosmic order is demonstrated by regular and orderly patterns in nature, such as the movements of the heavenly bodies (e.g. the sun) and the cycle of the seasons (e.g. rain and harvest) though these ideas are not his main concern here (on these Stoic ideas, see LS 54 A–C; also Algra 2009).

6.44 This chapter is not explicitly on the 'providence or atoms' theme, but it is centred on a question closely linked with that theme, whether or not the gods exercise providential care for individual human beings. It is one of the more problematic treatments of that type of theme in its argumentation, esp. in **6.44.4–6.44.6** (see further Introd., text to nn. 242–68 on

presentation of this theme in *Med.*). The 'providence or atoms' alternative is sometimes presented in *Med.* in the form of a disjunction of the following type: *both* in the case that A *and* in the case that B, I endorse a thesis based on A, where A stands for Stoicism and B for Epicureanism (see further Giavatto 2012a: 417–18; also Giavatto 2008: 213–28, Sedley 2012: 405–6). This passage presents a variation of that pattern, in which there are two versions of A (the Stoic alternative), and one of B (the Epicurean). However, in other respects the chapter matches this pattern and also brings out what is potentially problematic about the reasoning involved.

In **6.44.1–6.44.3**, Marcus considers the question from a standard Stoic standpoint. This section contains its own disjunction: 'if the gods have taken thought about me . . . if they have not taken thought about me. . .'. But, on either hypothesis, the gods are presented as exercising providential care: either they will not 'be motivated to do me harm' or 'at all events they have thought about the common good'. Common to both alternatives is the assumption that 'the common good' is that for which 'most of all, they exercise providential care'; and on the second alternative Marcus recognizes that 'I must welcome and love these events as a secondary consequence of that' (i.e. the common good). For this type of response, see **2.3**, **3.16.3**, and, for the idea of 'secondary consequences', see **3.2**, **6.36.2–6.36.3**. (I do not follow Dalfen 1987 in deleting 'events' in **6.44.3**.)

As discussed in note to **1.17** (main note, penultimate para.), Cicero, arguing from a Stoic position in *ND* 2.164–2.167, suggests that the gods do care for individuals; and, although the case is not very fully made there, the counterarguments in *ND* 3.66–3.93 indicate that this was a recognized Stoic view. However, the principal focus in Stoic thought is on providential care for the universe as a whole, or at least, humanity as a whole (see further Frede 2002: 95–115), and so Marcus' argument in **6.44.1–6.44.3**, referring to 'the common good' in one or both of these senses, reflects the main line of Stoic thinking.

Marcus' reasoning in **6.44.4–6.44.6** is more problematic. He considers the position twice on the hypothesis of the Epicurean view that the gods are not concerned with human events: 'suppose that they take no thought about anything . . . if the gods take no thought about any of our concerns' (for the Epicurean view, see LS 23 A, B(2), C–D, E(5)). First, he rejects this idea as 'not pious' and not justifying religious worship (for this response, see Cic. *ND* 1.112–1.113, put forward by Cotta, speaking as an Academic Sceptic but adopting a pro-Stoic position). Second, he maintains that, even on the Epicurean hypothesis, 'it is still possible for me to take

thought about myself, and . . . what benefits me'. He then claims that: 'What benefits each of us is in line with our own constitution and nature; my nature is rational and political' (**6.44.5**).

   This description of Marcus' nature is characteristic of *Med.* and is typically Stoic (see Reydams-Schils 2012b: 442–5). The Epicurean attitude to political engagement is more guarded, and Epicureans do not assume sociability as a key human characteristic in the same way (see LS 22 and Brown 2009). This statement is reinforced by an expression of the idea of 'dual citizenship' sometimes found in Stoic thought (compare *Sen. De Otio* 4.1 = LS 65 K and Introd., text to nn. 119–22): 'As Antoninus [Marcus' name following adoption], my city and fatherland is Rome, as a human being it is the universe' (**6.44.6**), adding that: 'It is only what benefits these cities which is good for me'. Marcus here presupposes the Stoic idea of the universe as a 'city and state shared by humans and gods' (Cic. Fin. 3.64 = LS 57 F(3), compare **2.16.6**, **4.4.1–4.4.2**).

   Marcus' claim in **6.44.4–6.44.6**, that he is justified in re-affirming Stoic ethical principles on the basis of an Epicurean world-view is problematic, for reasons underlined by Cooper 2004: 346–51. It might seem tempting to suppose that he is here detaching his ethical standpoint from the question of which world-view is true, as Annas (2004: 111–18) suggests. But this suggestion runs up against the difficulty that the 'dual-citizenship' idea of **6.44.6** assumes a Stoic world-view (and, in general, Marcus stresses the linkage between ethics and physics, in line with much Stoic thought). So, the conclusion of this chapter is questionable in its argumentation. However, as stressed in Introd., text to nn. 265–9, this kind of argumentation is not common in *Med.*, and the Stoic ethical position re-affirmed here is one he consistently adopts.

6.45 Marcus begins this chapter by re-affirming the Stoic view that, 'What happens to each of us benefits the whole' (compare **6.44.1–6.44.3**), adding that 'this should be enough'. However, he goes on to make the further claim that 'in general, what benefits one person also benefits others' (**6.45.2**); Dalfen 1987 marks the passage just quoted as corrupt, but it is intelligible, I think. Marcus clarifies that he has mind 'the more common sense' (*koinoteron*) of benefit (i.e., in Stoic terms, 'preferred indifferents' (for the phrase 'the more common sense', compare **2.10.1**). Presumably, he has in mind cases where one's health or wealth is advantageous to some other people, e.g. family and friends. A more strictly Stoic version of this claim, not indicated here, is that all the wise are benefited by each other's benefit (i.e. their virtue); see LS 60 P.

6.46 Marcus' comment about being 'sickened by the displays in the amphitheatre' is confirmed by his evident lack of interest when he attended the games (which, as emperor, he had to do); compare *HA, Vita Marci* 4.4.8, 15.1, Fronto, *ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.13 (Van den Hout 1988: 66, Haines 1919–20: 1.206–1.207); see also note on **1.5**. It is perhaps surprising that Marcus does not express moral outrage at the gratuitous violence in the games, with its degrading effect on the spectators, as Seneca does (*Ep.* 7.3–7.5, 90.45, 95.33); but here (and in **10.8.4**), Marcus—who may have shared Seneca's view—has other themes in mind.

Marcus' reaction to the 'monotony' and 'tedious' nature of life and his longing for release ('For how long then?') seem, taken in isolation, to express merely world-weariness. But the response needs to be taken in conjunction with his Stoic-inspired views about eternal recurrence (e.g. **5.13.4**, **5.32.2**) and his conviction that, even if the events he sees in life are the same, this does not invalidate the importance of maintaining his ongoing project of self-improvement (e.g. **4.32**, **4.44**, **11.1.3**).

6.47 This chapter offers another treatment of the universality of death. As elsewhere (see **3.3**, **4.48**), Marcus underlines the paradox that those who seem to want to evade death, by their exceptional fame or achievement, meet the same outcome as everyone else, including the totally unknown. The chapter ends with positive ethical advice about how to live out one's life while acknowledging one's impending death.

The examples of the dead are grouped in threes: 'Philistion, Phoebus and Origanion' (**6.47.1**, unknown, so perhaps Marcus' servants, but at any rate, people without reputation); 'Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates' (**6.47.2**, famous Greek philosophers of the sixth and fifth century BC); 'Eudoxus, Hipparchus, Archimedes' (**6.47.4**, Eudoxus a fourth-century BC astronomer and mathematician, Hipparchus a second-century BC astronomer, Archimedes a very famous third-century BC mathematician).

Marcus also stresses that death awaits people regardless of their quality or character, ranging from those 'with intellectual genius', like those listed, to 'self-willed people who mock the transitory and ephemeral nature of human life, such as Menippus and people like that' (**6.47.4**). Marcus has in mind the Cynics, such as Menippus (a notable third-century BC Cynic), for whom 'death as a leveller' was a prominent theme. Menippus is the central figure of a work named after him by Lucian (born *c.*120, a contemporary of Marcus), which centres on this subject (see Desmond 2008: 36–9, 64–7). Marcus' may have read Lucian's work; at all events, he is, evidently, familiar with this Cynic mode of treating death.

His reference to the Cynic attitude is particularly interesting, because, at first sight, his own handling of this theme, here and elsewhere, might seem to reflect a Cynic standpoint, highlighting the futility of human aspirations to immortal fame but offering no constructive alternative. However, Marcus then proceeds—in a very un-Cynic manner—to spell out a positive ethical message, regarding the 'one thing that is of most value' (**6.47.6**), once we have come to terms with the transient nature of human life and fame, spelled out in **6.47.5**. This is 'to live out your life in truth and justice, and be kind to those who are false and unjust'. Marcus thus encapsulates in short form a core Stoic ethical message, that what makes life at any one time worthwhile is the attempt to express the virtues, including proper treatment of those who fail to understand or live by this message (see **2.1**).

6.48 As noted in Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 6–7, writing this chapter, along with **6.30**, seems to have prompted Marcus to compose what we call 'Book 1' of *Med.* As in Book 1, Marcus refers to dwelling on the 'good qualities' of those who have shared his life; the phraseology used ('the energy of one . . .'), expressed as *to* plus neuter adjective, evokes the standard format of Book 1. The idea that 'there is nothing so cheering as the images (*homoiōmata*) of the virtues displayed in the characters of those who live with you, grouped together as far as possible' (**6.48.2**) evokes strongly the Greco-Roman exemplary tradition, which seems to lie behind *Med.* 1 (Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 17–23). The references to 'groups' is striking, as the figures in Book 1 seem to be arranged in groups (see start of Commentary on Book 1). Normally, Marcus talks of 'doctrines' as things that need to be kept 'ready at hand' (compare **3.13.1**, **4.3.3**); but here he describes (exemplary) people in that way (**6.48.3**).

6.49 This chapter gives a new twist to one of Marcus' common themes, the insignificance of length of life, as contrasted with its ethical quality; compare **2.14.1**, **4.50.6** (which also use 'three' or 'three hundred' as examples to make the point).

6.50 This chapter begins by exploring the challenge of trying to act virtuously, even when dealing with people who make this difficult. If persuasion fails, Marcus urges himself to 'act even against their will' if this is what justice requires. 'But if someone uses force' to prevent just action, then he recommends 'accepting' this, and using 'the setback to express another virtue', which might be self-control or tolerance

(**6.50.1–6.50.2**; see Epictetus' treatment of a similar interpersonal predicament, *Diss.* 3.3.5–3.3.10, compare Long 2002: 236–8).

The idea of trying to act well even when obstructed leads Marcus to think of the principle of wishing 'with reservation' (*hupexairesis*). Stoic ethical teachers recommend thinking about wishes in this way: 'I wish for x or y if nothing prevents it' (see note on **4.1**). This principle normally applies to wishing to obtain 'indifferents', though here it is applied to acting well in a certain way (i.e. justly in a specific situation). However, Marcus ends by pointing out that, simply by forming a good motive 'with reservation', he has in a sense fulfilled his ethical aim ('you have achieved this; what we proposed to ourselves is actually happening', **6.50.3**). This conclusion presupposes the Stoic view (much criticized in antiquity) that virtue is a 'stochastic' art, which consists in 'aiming' to act virtuously, even if you do not produce the results you wanted (see LS 64 A–J).

6.51 This short chapter uses phraseology in a pointed way to underline its message, with three-fold repetition of 'his own (coupled with 'good', 'experience', and 'action') and a final contrast between 'experience' (*peisis*, a synonym of *pathos*) and 'action' (*praxis*). The lover of glory surrenders his moral autonomy in placing his own good in the hands of others; the lover of pleasure locates his good in what is, in one sense, 'his own', i.e. his experience (though this, typically, also depends on others too or at least on factors falling outside one's agency). But 'he who has understanding' sees that 'his good' consists in 'his own action', which falls within his power as agent (with the qualifications outlined in **6.50**). In other words, the chapter depends, as often in *Med.*, on the distinction stressed by Epictetus (*Ench.* 1) on what is and is not 'up to us' as ethical agents.

6.52 This chapter restates a recurrent theme in *Med.*; e.g. **4.3.10, 5.19**; 'about this' refers to something unspecified that Marcus has in mind. The point depends on the assumption that, as rational animals, we are motivated only by forming rational impressions (or judgements), and that it is 'up to us', as ethical agents, to form and to evaluate critically the judgements we form (see further note on **6.51** and Brennan 2003: 260–9).

6.53 Marcus gives himself similar advice elsewhere (**7.4, 7.30**) where the aim seems to be to develop a highly focused form of thoughtful attention to all aspects of a given situation. Here, the emphasis falls on close engagement with another's person's 'mind' or 'character' (*psuchē*) when he or she

is speaking (though this need not rule out critical evaluation, as indicated in **6.50** and elsewhere). In **8.61**, Marcus suggests the process should be mutual (using the term 'ruling centre'), implying that this is a standard part of proper communication.

6.54 This short chapter provides a striking version of a familiar theme in *Med.*, that the individual is benefited by the benefit of the whole of which he is a part; compare **5.22**, **6.45.1**; also **2.3**.

6.55 The precise interpretation (and punctuation) of this short chapter is a matter for debate; my translation follows the text of Trannoy 1953 and Dalfen 1987; for a different view, see Farquharson 1944: 716. On my reading, the meaning of the passage is that any criticism of the captain or doctor by crew or patients is—or at least should be—directed solely at the proper exercise of his expertise, 'to ensure the safety of those passengers or the health of his patients'. Presumably, the point is that, in a relationship of this type, other interpersonal or affective grounds for criticism are unimportant compared with the proper exercise of the relevant expertise. The doctor and captain are favourite Platonic metaphors for ethical or political expertise, and the idea that virtue is a kind of expertise is a standard Stoic view that Marcus adopts. So, in stressing the importance of expertise within interpersonal relationships, what he, probably, has in mind here (as often elsewhere, e.g. **2.1**) is the idea that such relationships should be shaped by ethical knowledge, and that this fact should be recognized by both participants even if they do not possess this knowledge to an equal degree.

6.56 Marcus here presents the familiar theme of human transience (compare **6.47**) in an unusually personal way ('entered the world with me'). It is generally supposed that Marcus wrote *Med.* during his final decade and is likely to be about 55 at this point (see further Introd., text to nn. 11–12, also Introd. to Book 1, text to nn. 5–7). This passage, taken with **6.30**, **6.48**, might be taken as an indication that he is thinking about *Med.* 1, and planning to recall what he has gained from some of those who 'entered the world with me' or who, at least, shared part of their lives with him.

6.57 This chapter presupposes the normal Stoic view that 'passions' such as anger are based on 'false opinions', especially false opinions about what is good and worth pursuing; compare LS 65 B, D, Introd., text to nn. 130–4. Marcus here underlines this point by comparing anger with the state of

those whose view of things is distorted by jaundice, rabies, or immaturity (i.e. being a child).

6.58 This chapter briefly restates one of the most standard themes in *Med.*; compare **2.9, 5.10.6–5.10.7**. The stress on the idea that 'no one shall prevent you' evokes Epict. *Ench.* 1, *Diss.* 1.1.7–1.1.12; the linkage between living 'in line with the rationality of your own nature' and events being in line 'with the rationality of universal nature' evokes D. L. 7.88 (= LS 63C(3–4), a passage that seems often to be in Marcus' mind.

6.59 The first sentence here criticizes those who surrender their moral autonomy by wanting to please others; and the phrasing, 'What sort of people' suggests that those others are not worth pleasing and that the actions performed to please them are not worth doing. The second sentence points out how quickly 'time will cover' these things as it has covered much already. Although Marcus' language here is general, parallel passages suggest he is underlining the futility of placing value on fame, which is often earned by dubious means and is in any case as transitory as everything else. Compare **3.4.4–3.4.5, 4.37, 7.34**.

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LIST OF MAIN THEMES IN MEDITATIONS 2–6.

This list offers a brief overview of the main topics in Books 2–6 of the *Meditations*, cited by book and chapter. In most cases, one or two topics only are listed. For a much fuller outline of the themes in these books (and Book 1), see the General Index.

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Entries for each author (e.g. Cicero, Plato) are arranged by alphabetic order of Greek or Latin titles (or their abbreviations) even if English titles are also given. Passages listed under Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, or *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* are only those so identified in the book; passages also identified by author and work are listed in that form here.

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