

The Stoic Way

Handout

Locke Lectures, Oxford 2011

Lecture III

1. Aristotle d. 322 BCE
Zeno, of Citium c. 334-262 BCE
Chrysippus, of Soli c. 280-c. 206 BCE

Seneca d. 65 CE
Epictetus c. 55-135 CE
Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor 161-180 CE
2. Eudaimonia (happiness, the highest human good) =
 - a. “Living in agreement (...),” i.e. (i) with oneself, (ii) with the mind of Zeus = with nature.
 - b. “Living in accordance with nature”
 - c. “Living virtuously”

3. The World-Animal = the cosmos

The cosmos = this spherical material body we see around us,

a.) containing the earth, the sun and moon and planets and stars, and all the living and non-living things on and around the earth, together with all the stuffs with which, taken as a whole, the cosmos is completely filled up, with no empty spaces within it,

b.) animated by its unitary soul, the world-soul, a material thing spread everywhere through it.

The history of the world, from creation to ultimate cessation = the life-history of the World-Animal.

4. Zeus = the unitary, perfectly rational single mind, a corporeal but non-material thing, spread everywhere through the world-soul, to infinitesimal level, and thereby spread also everywhere through the world-animal’s material body.
5. The ultimate cause of every thing and every event is an act of some mind, the world-mind or some human one, deciding that it shall exist or happen.
6. Adult human animals, as being rational, possess minds of the same substance as Zeus’s, though humans are imperfect and limited in their rational nature; human minds are self-directing parts of the divine substance.