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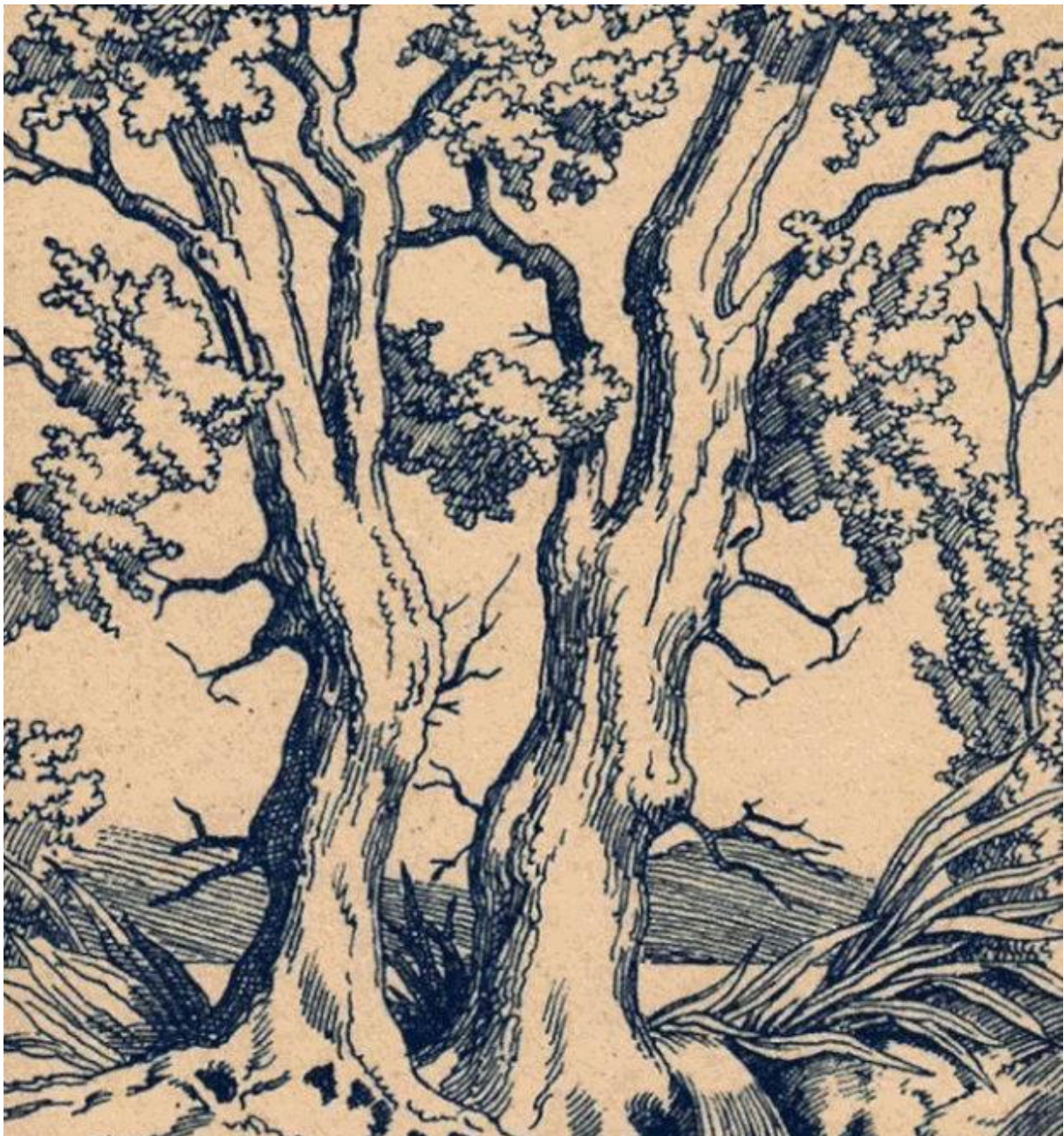
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The Role of Perception in Hierocles



Introduction

Very little is known of Hierocles the Stoic, a Greek philosopher in the second century CE. Of his works only two texts have survived to this day. One was preserved by Stobaeus, a fifth century Macedonian collector and compiler of Greek texts, the other was found as a fragmented papyrus at Hermopolis in 1901. Although some considerable scholarly work on Hierocles had already been done by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a complete translation of Hierocles' writings had yet to be made. In 2009 however, Ilaria Ramelli and David Konstan published an extensive translation of Hierocles' surviving works into English. It is with this translation that I will analyse the role of perception in Hierocles' philosophy.

The Hermopolis papyrus, *The Elements of Ethics*, forms a metaphysical starting point of Hierocles' philosophy. In it, Hierocles takes perception as a starting point for the acquisition of a first appropriation. First and foremost, all animals should be able to care for themselves and be inclined to do so. They must therefore be appropriated to themselves. Building on this foundation, the Stobaeus text, *On Appropriate Acts*, seeks to detail human appropriation to others. Unlike the appropriation to the self, appropriation to others seems to be built on reason. Still, I believe that perception plays an important, albeit invisible, role.

The connection between perception and appropriation (*oikeiosis*) is not so straightforward as it may seem. Both concepts have a very unique meaning in the Stoic context, which allows them to interact in surprising ways. I shall, therefore, adopt the following order. I will start with a, for my purpose detailed, explanation of perception and appropriation. With the concepts properly defined, I will move through Hierocles' texts in the order of his argument and analyse the role of perception with three distinct questions. Is perception necessary for self-appropriation? Is perception sufficient for self-appropriation? And finally; What, if any, is the role of perception in the appropriation of others?

In the span of these four chapters I will endeavour to track the role of perception as a red line through Hierocles' philosophy, explicating its role and implications for multiple interpretations of the text. To do this I will adopt the methodology of Hierocles himself and meet his empirical evidence with my own.

Chapter 1: Defining Concepts

When exploring the connection between two specific elements of philosophy, one should always start by precisely detailing the definitions of those elements. I will, therefore, take some time to explain the Stoic ideas on perception and the etymology *oikeiosis*. I shall start with perception, which itself needs a short review of the Stoic metaphysical model.

The Stoics believed that, besides the four incorporeals (place, void, time and *lekton*), the world consists only of corporeal things. The corporeal is divided amongst two principles: the active and the passive. The passive principle, which is simply three-dimensional extension that offers resistance upon touch, cannot move or change on its own. Rather, it is pervaded wholly by the active principle which informs it and fills it with qualities. All things are a perfect solution¹, or blend, of the active and passive principles. That is, a union of two substances such that, within a certain space, there is no place where a part of the passive principle does not touch a part of the active principle or vice versa. The human soul is a particular shape² of the active principle and is therefore also understood as a physical substance in a perfect solution with the body. Since the Stoics believed the world to be completely material, their concept of perception was a literal (physical) impression left by the perceived on the active principle (soul) present in the sense organ³.

For many senses this doesn't form a problem. Taste and touch are easily understood as physical affections. Hearing and smell are affected by the air that in turn is affected by the objects in specific ways. Sight, however, seems a bit more of a challenge in the Stoic model. To achieve the physical contact between object and sense organ, the Stoics argued that our eyes have the ability to 'extend' the active principle outward in a cone shape. Because the active principle of living beings is of the same quality as that of sunlight, namely warm and dry, the active principle of vision can 'merge' with the sunlight⁴. Thereby extending the reach of our vision substantially. Through this argument, the Stoics seek to connect visual perception to the perceived in the same way as they connected hearing and smell: physical contact through a medium. Only the effectiveness of this medium is now dependent on light.

¹ A solution is a blend where the individual substances are no longer visibly distinct from each other. While we nowadays might be tempted to think of a 'roster of particles' the ancient Stoics would probably have thought of a (part of the) body being made up of both active and passive corporeal existence at the same time in the same space. Overlapping or coexisting, as it were, in the same three-dimensional space.

² I use the word 'shape' for, if the soul is in contact with all parts of the body, it must have the same shape as the body.

³ Løkke, Håvard. "The Stoics on Sense-Perception." In *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, door Simo Knuuttila en Pekka Kärkkäinen, 34-46. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.

⁴ *Idem*.

Now that I have given the briefest of overviews on the Stoic ideas that form the relevant basis for perception, I shall continue exploring it in more detail.

Stoic perception is quite a complex and elaborate theory and would require a paper in itself to properly explain. A summary of those elements which are important for this work shall therefore have to suffice. Generally, when the Stoics write on perception, they regard it as split in two steps⁵: First, one obtains an impression, and second, there is the moment of 'assent'. However, when pressed for more details, the Stoics more precisely define perception as having three steps. First, the sense organ suffers an affection from an outside object. Second, the perception forms an impression on the soul. Third, a rational agent will choose whether to give assent to the impression⁶. When writing on perception, the early Stoics are mostly concerned with adult human, or rational, agents. As such, we will start there before discussing non-rational perception.

For rational humans, once a perception has left its imprint on the soul it is necessarily understood in a rational sense⁷. An impression of this kind may, therefore, be articulated in the form of a proposition such as "This is a white wall". This statement is either true or false. Therefore, like all propositions, it has a truth-value. Such a proposition is believed to be independent of the actual perception. When I look away from the white wall and extend my hand to touch it, I can feel the resistance of the wall remains. The wall is still there and, presumably, still white. For the active principle within the wall, which informs the passive matter with qualities, is physically present within the wall and is not dependent on my visual contact with it. Assuming the active principle remains unchanged, the wall that I now touch but cannot see is still a wall, and still white. Similarly, when I look at the wall but do not touch it, I will know that I do not perceive some white mirage that I can easily walk through. The wall remains a wall, so it will keep offering strong physical resistance.

The truth-value of my proposition "This is a white wall" remains the same regardless of me perceiving the object in question. The existence of propositions forces us to accept that rational agents have the power to conceive of concepts and link these to the outside world. To continue the example from before, those concepts would be 'white' and 'wall'. Not only are we able to perceive white, but the existence of the impression of white as a proposition allows us to recognize white as 'white'; a name for a collection of colours that look alike in a certain way. In other words, we must be able to label and categorise things we perceive. We interact with the truth-value of our propositions through concepts in our minds. For if we are to find out whether 'this' is indeed both 'wall' and white', we must know what it

⁵ Løkke, Håvard. "The Stoics on Sense-Perception." In *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, door Simo Knuuttila en Pekka Kärkkäinen, 34-46. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.

⁶ *Idem.*

⁷ *Idem.*

means to be 'wall' or to be 'white'. This brings us to the matter of assent, which is the decision to attribute a truth-value to the proposition. Does the perceived 'this' in fact line up with both my concept of 'wall' and my concept of 'white', yes or no? Note that the answer is not in fact the actual truth-value of the proposition, but merely the one I attribute to it. If the perceived object matches with my concept of 'white' and 'wall' I will attribute the proposition with the truth-value 'true'. I assent that, indeed, the perception I have can be accurately described by the proposition 'this is a white wall'. Again, my assent to the proposition by labelling it as 'true' is completely independent of the *actual* truth-value of the proposition. As such, we can make errors of judgement by crediting a true proposition as false, or vice versa. The matter of assent is rather complex, but for the purpose of this paper what has been said should suffice.

For animals, perceptive organs and impressions work similarly. However, unlike us, animals do not have reason. Therefore, they are unable to conceive of concepts and thus, cannot form propositions. The impression left on animal souls, then, immediately compels the body to action. The early Stoics were not particularly concerned with the mental capacities of animals. Their shallow conception of animal perception leads to a theory where animals are thought of as purely automatic creatures. They do not think, plan, recognize or identify⁸. They merely exist according to a certain nature and will take immediate responsive action when they gain a particular impression.

It is technically unclear whether later Stoa still embraced this simplistic view, but it is on the basis of those later Stoic texts that some contemporary philosophers have argued that animals are allowed much more complexity in the Stoic model⁹. Stoic perception relies on impressions which *must* contain at least 1) an object for the soul to be affected by and 2) a "hormetic marker"¹⁰ to move the animal's soul. The impression leads directly to impulsive movement in the animal, and the marker determines what the impulse should be. Naturally, there are strong limitations to this theory. Firstly, the animal does not actually *know* what it is perceiving. Because a non-rational animal has no concepts, it has no proper way of identification. Additionally, the same hormetic marker leads to different impulses in different animals¹¹. Lastly, it seems untrue that an animal will always respond with the same impulse to the same perception.

⁸ Brittain, Charles. "Non-Rational Perception in the Stoics and Augustine." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. Vol.22, 2002: 253-308.

⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁰ Presumably from the Greek *hormē* (impulse) "i.e. something that distinguishes this kind of impression from simple perception". Brittain, Charles. "Non-Rational Perception in the Stoics and Augustine." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. Vol.22, 2002: 253-308.

¹¹ Fruit will give an impulse of feeding to monkeys, but none at all to a tiger.

Brittain thinks he can make the stoic argument work. He argues that the late Stoics imply some form of 'quasi-concepts' are present in animals. Brittain's argument rests on Aetius who admits that animals possess the same quality of imagination as humans; allowing them to remember and dream¹². Brittain argues that such an imagination might open the door to the possibility of animals recognizing certain things as food, and others as shelter or danger, while not actually possessing the concepts of what these things are. These 'quasi-concepts' would give us grounds to say that animals do not in fact exist wholly automatically but are able to recognize things in their environment to a certain degree and *choose* to interact with them. This interpretation would greatly improve the amount of animal behaviours explicable with the Stoic model. Including, as we will see, much of the otherwise incompatible animal behaviour recorded in Hierocles' texts.

I have briefly explained the Stoic theory of perception based on their physical model of the world. I have also addressed the differences in perception between rational and non-rational animals, as well as point out a difficulty with the lack of concepts in the latter. I shall now move on to give a similar summary of the second term of interest for this paper: *oikeiosis*.

The term *oikeiosis* is a Greek term which has so far eluded a wholly satisfactory translation into English. To communicate some of the depth of this term, I will shortly touch upon the Greek semantics before transitioning to the chosen English stand-in. *Oikeiosis* is a verb which comes from the word *oikeios*. *Oikeios* adds a possessive form to *oikia* (house), making it 'that which belongs to the house'. Now, the house itself is not a person and has no possessions in the traditional sense. However, it is a place, or more accurately, a *kind* of place, to which we attribute certain things. In the case of a 'house' that would be the people living in it. These people are considered *oikeios*: 'those who belong to the house'.¹³ Now, the verb *oikeiosis* can be understood as the act of 'making someone part of those who belong to the house'. In simpler terms, it is the verb for adopting someone into the family. Since in this context family ties do not necessitate blood ties, both *oikeios* and *oikeiosis* can encompass many people which are not *actually* family, but which are nonetheless close to you¹⁴.

It is important to note that *oikeios* and *oikeiosis* are wholly personal. Although a family consists of many members, each has their own set of relations with others. The 'house', therefore, is evidently metaphorical as multiple people living under the same roof might not be *oikeios* to each other (part of each other's 'house') and the set of people who

¹² Aetius 4. 12 (SVF ii. 54).

¹³ Note that this is not the same as 'the household'. The proper word for 'family' or 'the household' is *oikos*. In simple terms one could say that *oikos* is the proper family, while *oikeios* is an honorary term to say that someone is "like family".

¹⁴ Pembroke, S. G. "Oikeiosis." In *Problems in Stoicism*, door A. A. Long, 126-. London: Athlone Press, 1971.

are *oikeios* to the residents might differ strongly between said residents and have no necessity to overlap at all. That the 'house' is metaphorical is also evident when it comes to the use of *oikeiosis* in the Stoic texts. It is rather clear that those things which are *oikeios* are thought of more broadly as 'those people which are important to the agent'.

Oikeiosis has often been translated as 'appropriation' because of its function of adopting or appropriating things into one's inner circle of importance. *Oikeiosis* is the appropriation of things outside of one's direct care and bringing them closer¹⁵. 'Appropriating' is a verb, connecting the agent to something else in a sense of 'adopting' as well as 'adapting'. One can accept something as being appropriate to them. Something appropriate to us is 'proper' or 'right' to be connected to us in a certain way. Appropriation as 'adoption' allows us to bring new things into the set of 'that which is appropriate to/for us'. One can also adapt oneself, consciously or subconsciously, to a situation. When we adapt ourselves, we change our behaviour to become 'proper' or 'right' for something or someone else. In such cases we speak of being 'appropriated'. Notice that appropriation of people will always involve an active party bringing the outside in through appropriating (verb) and a passive party being brought in by being appropriated (direct object). As this is the commonly accepted English translation of *oikeiosis*, I will be using 'appropriation' for the remainder of this Essay.

Appropriation, then, is the act of bringing someone from outside into the inner circle of people appropriate (*oikeios*) to us. It is at this point that we must make a small sidestep and talk about what that inner circle of importance initially contains. In other words, what is the first appropriate thing? It seems that most Stoics agree that the first appropriate thing is oneself¹⁶. All animals, including humans¹⁷, wish to preserve themselves. From the moment of birth, inherent self-perception¹⁸ informs the creature of its needs and a non-rational creature will immediately act to fulfil those needs to the best of its ability. The behaviour of self-preservation is a sign that animals care for their lives and all animals seem to show this behaviour. The Stoics say, therefore, that animals are all firstly appropriated to themselves.

¹⁵ Pembroke, S. G. "Oikeiosis." In *Problems in Stoicism*, door A. A. Long, 126-. London: Athlone Press, 1971. and

Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. "Filling Pembroke's Lacuna in the Oikeiosis Argument." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* Vol.88, 2006: 216-220.

¹⁶ Ramelli, Ilaria. *Hierocles the Stoic Elements of Ethics, Fragments and Excerpts*. Translated by David Konstan. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009. Pg 42

and

Brittain, Charles. "Peripatetic Appropriations of Oikeiosis: Alexander, Mantissa Chapter 17." In *From Stoicism to Platonism: The Development of Philosophy*, by Engberg-Pedersen Troels, 322-347. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

¹⁷ The Stoics thought of humans as rational animals. In Stoic texts, whenever there is talk of 'all animals' this will include humans unless otherwise specified.

¹⁸ There will be an extensive explanation and debate about this in chapters 2 and 3.

There are creatures, however, that will develop an appropriation to others over the course of their lifetime. These social animals recognize that their chance of survival is increased by working together. The survival of the group becomes tied to one's own survival through what the Stoics believe to be an inherent knowledge that the whole can survive without some of its parts, but the parts cannot survive without the whole¹⁹. Additionally, the ties between parents and children seem very strong in both the animal world and the human society. Both the bonds between members of the herd, and those between parents and child will be discussed in later chapters.

Evidently humans are one such species of social animal. While at first humans will only care for themselves and use social cues like crying to make others conform to their wishes, in later stages of childhood humans develop a sense of attachment to others. We recognize that our survival is dependent on our parents/guardians, who protect and nurture us. We learn not to bite the hand that feeds. To say that we feel appropriated to each other merely because it increases our chances of survival, however, does not feel quite right. In our current western view, there seems to be far more to the social nature of humans than merely a herd mentality for increased chances of survival. Whether Hierocles saw more in human society than in animal society remains to be seen. These subjects and more I will discuss in the next chapters.

¹⁹ Reydams-Schils, Gretchen. "Human Bonding and Oikeiosis in Roman Stoicism." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. Vol.22, 2002: 221-251.

Chapter 2 The Necessity of Self-Perception

I have mentioned the connection between perception, preservation and appropriation, but I have yet to explain its details. In this chapter and the next I will discuss the relation between these concepts purely within the self by exploring the necessity and sufficiency of self-perception for self-appropriation. Only after that will I extend beyond the self into a social context. In this chapter I will discuss the arguments that Hierocles gives in *The Elements of Ethics* to support the thesis that perception is necessary both for self-appropriation and self-preservation. I will then introduce an interesting challenge to one of Hierocles' arguments and address it.

The opening of Hierocles' *The Elements of Ethics* immediately introduces the idea of self-appropriation as the basis of any animal. In these opening lines he writes of the "first thing that is one's own and familiar"²⁰. Hierocles argues that this "first appropriate thing", as it is more often referred to, is the self. In other words, the first appropriation is self-appropriation. When an animal is born, its active principle is at once transformed into a soul²¹. The soul has within it our capacity for perception and action, for it is the active principle that shapes the passive and informs it of its qualities. When an animal is born, its active principle is at once transformed into the sort of active principle which we call a soul. Due to the soul, an animal is distinct from a non-animal in two distinct ways: the presence of perception and the presence of impulse. It is the first of these that is of the most interest both to us, and to Hierocles himself, because it is what allows us to become appropriated to ourselves.

As mentioned, perception is a fundamental part of the soul's existence. It allows animals to perceive things from the outside. But the soul is also responsible for self-perception, for perception can never be without self-perception²². Hierocles explains in a three-step²³ argument. First, we must remember that indeed the soul falls in the class of bodies and is therefore touchable and offers resistance. Second, the soul is not encased in

²⁰ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. I.1.

²¹ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. I.15-30.

²² Inwood, Brad. "Hierocles on Self-Perception." In *Later Stoicism 155 BC to AD 200: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation.*, by Inwood Brad, 480-489. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

²³ There is a fourth step regarding movement and tension, but for the purposes of this essay including it would only create unnecessary complexity.

the body “like [water] in a bucket”²⁴ but is rather mixed wholly with the body such that there is no part of the body that is not in physical connection with the soul. Third, if the soul perceives and is in physical contact with all of the body, and if both the soul and the body are in the class of bodies and therefore offer resistance upon touch, then we can clearly see that the soul has no choice but to always be aware of the body, and all its parts, through touch. It is clear that the perception that allows animals to be aware of their surroundings also necessitates their awareness of their bodies. That an animal is aware of their body and its parts is also supported by the empirical data from nature. Animals seem to be inherently aware of their own body, and its abilities. For when a creature wants to see something more clearly, they will turn towards it with their eyes, not their ears²⁵. Similarly, when a bird wants to fly it uses its wings, but if it wants to walk it uses its legs. Additionally, creatures seem to be inherently aware of what weapons they have at their disposal and which parts of their body are vulnerable to attacks from other animals. As Hierocles puts it²⁶.

“For bulls, when they are readying themselves for a fight with other bulls or with animals of a different species, thrust their horns forward, like weapons that grow naturally for battle. And every other animal is similarly disposed toward its own and, so to speak, inborn weapon. For some are fortified with hooves, others with teeth, others with tusks, others with spikes, still others with poisons, and they employ these for defence in clashes with other animals. [...] Furthermore, animals also perceive which of their parts are weak and which are strong and hard to affect. In this way, for example, the bull, when it is getting ready to defend itself against an attack, positions its horns in front of the entire rest of its body. The tortoise, in turn, when it becomes aware of an assault, withdraws its head and feet beneath the part that is hard and more difficult to get a handle on. The snail too does something similar, rolling itself up in its horny part when it perceives danger.”²⁷

These behaviours are the backbone of an animal's capacity for self-preservation. A creature must know its weapons and weaknesses to take successful action to preserve itself. Naturally, in order to be aware of these things a creature must be able to perceive itself.

It is clear that animals indeed have self-perception, but how does this self-perception lead to the self-appropriation that Hierocles claims comes immediately together with it? Hierocles continues his argument with the introduction of an evaluative element of perception. “[When an animal perceives itself] either the animal is pleased with the

²⁴ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. IV.1.

²⁵ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. I.55.

²⁶ Inwood, Brad. “Hierocles on Self-Perception.” In *Later Stoicism 155 BC to AD 200: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation.*, by Inwood Brad, 480-489. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

²⁷ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. II. 5-25.

representation that it has received of itself, or it is displeased, or else it remains indifferent”²⁸. The next part of the original text has been mostly lost, but from context we can make out that Hierocles proceeds to offer an argument in defence of his position. When, fifteen verses later, we finally come again to readable text Hierocles concludes:

“Because of this, no one, it seems to me, not even if he were Margites²⁹, could say that an animal, when it has been born, is displeased with itself and with its representation of itself. And, in fact, it does not remain indifferent: for not being pleased, no less than displeasure, leads both to the destruction of the animal and to a contempt for its own nature. Consequently, this reasoning compels us to agree that an animal, when it has received the first perception of itself, immediately becomes its own and familiar to itself and to its constitution.”³⁰

To further strengthen his argument, Hierocles continues with pointing out more empirical observations that seem to align with his argument. He writes of the unfailing consistency with which animals care for themselves, even when they are unsightly or weak. Additionally, Hierocles mentions the reaction of human infants when placed in a dark room without sound. They start crying and screaming, for the absence of perception gives them a glimpse of the oblivion that awaits them at their own destruction³¹. Why would they be in such distress if not for the basic notion that they do not *want* to stop existing. Additionally, we will endure any unsightly affliction of our own flesh if it means survival, even if we do not tolerate the same impurities in others³².

The loss of the fifteen verses of argument for this conclusion is extremely unfortunate. Nonetheless, the conclusion remains and so do some of the arguments that support it. Hierocles is convinced that the active principle, which in animals is called the soul, imbues them with an inherent and unceasing perception of the self and the outside. Only the self, however, seems to always be perceived positively. It is because of this inherent positive self-perception that creatures are their own first appropriate thing. Indeed, when one reads *The Elements of Ethics* it instils one with a sense of obviousness. Animals preserve themselves because they are appropriated to themselves, which all animals are because their self-perception is constant and unfailingly positive. It is clear to me that in the model

²⁸ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. VI. 25-30

²⁹ Margites is a fictional character from a work of the same name attributed to Homer. Now largely lost, the comedic epic is referred to by multiple Greek authors, Plato and Aristotle amongst them. This leads us to believe it was famous back then, and already an old classic by Hierocles' time. Margites' main character trait is stupidity. He can't do, nor learn anything, has failed every art and is so unintelligent that he does not know from which parent he was born.

³⁰ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. VI. 40-50

³¹ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. VII. 5.

³² Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. VII. 20-35.

proposed by Hierocles, self-perception is a necessary element for self-appropriation. Firstly, it follows directly from a core tenet of their philosophy; that the soul is physical like all other things³³. And secondly, it is supported by the empirical data that we can gather from nature. The necessity of self-perception for self-appropriation seems to be well-defended by Hierocles. A challenge to his argument arises, however, when one realises that the empirical data might *not* in fact support his claims in every instance.

I shall take jellyfish as an example. Amongst the creatures that form a challenge to the argument detailed above I believe the jellyfish to be the best known and most fascinating. Contrary to their name, jellyfish are not actually fish but a form of zooplankton. Although jellyfish have no brain, they do have a rudimentary nervous system which is capable of perceiving things like the saltiness of the water, and temperature as well as physical touch³⁴. Some jellyfish even have visual sense-organs with which they are able to detect light intensity³⁵. Their bodies passively absorb oxygen from the water and the nutrients from their prey, so internal organs like a heart, lungs and a digestive system are not necessary.

Apart from their nervous system (and sometimes eyes), jellyfish do not have perceptual organs. Now, in the model presented by Hierocles, a creature does not *need* perceptual organs to be able to perceive itself. Instead, the mere presence of the soul is enough for any animal to be aware of its body and all its parts, for it is in direct physical contact with the soul which perceives it with touch. Thus, even a jellyfish can be said to perceive itself and therefore be immediately appropriated to itself. However, the soul can only perceive things that are present. Because the jellyfish has no stomach to be empty, nor kidneys to produce adrenaline, nor a brain to receive signals of any kind and release certain hormones, it is incapable of perceiving anything that would normally be attributed to these parts of a body. For if nature meant for it to perceive such things, the active principle would have shaped the body to include such places for those parts of the soul to reside. Due to the absence of the internal organs, a jellyfish does not feel hunger, nor fear, nor safety. Just the same as it cannot hear, taste, or smell.

³³ This step is dependent on Hierocles' belief that animal self-perception must be positive. I have not argued for or against this assumption, as it is the result of a missing argument. I will accept it and move on, rather than fall into long arguments of almost pure speculation.

³⁴ Katsuki, Takeo, and Ralph Greenspan. "Jellyfish Nervous Systems." *Current Biology Vol.23 No.14*, n.d.: 593-594.

³⁵ It is important to note that due to the lack of a centralised brain structure, the visual perception of jellyfish is not one that actually registers like our vision. Instead, the information is directly responsible for a unique synaptic response that shoots through the nervous system and instructs the muscles to contract in such a way that the jellyfish will swim towards the light.

To mirror Hierocles' style of argument, I wish to also point out the empirical proof for this argument in the jellyfish's behaviour. For when we study jellyfish, we come to realise that they take no action to uphold themselves. There is no activity inspired by self-preservation. A jellyfish will never search for food, nor run from predators. Instead, it floats³⁶ with the currents and holds out its tendrils for interaction with the outside world. If something is perceived, the jellyfish reacts out of pure impulse in an attempt to feed. However, if it fails to catch anything it won't pursue its prey. When the jellyfish is attacked, the same stingers that subdue its food passively hurt the attacker, but the jellyfish doesn't run away³⁷ or fight back.

One could argue that other animals are passive in their self-preservation. Some animals like the spider lay traps to snare prey, other animals lie in wait to ambush their prey, and yet others like turtles don't fight when attacked but merely protect themselves with their shield. But this comparison would be mistaken. For a spider, or any other trap laying or ambushing animal, takes deliberate action in setting up their trap or suddenly jumping out of hiding in an ambush. These are very active and deliberate self-sustaining actions. Contrarily, a jellyfish merely eats what happens to be in proximity to it. It lays no traps, nor does it ambush other creatures. It *is* the trap. Similarly, the defences of a turtle, or any other creature with a similar mode of protection, is dependent on the animal taking action to retreat into the safe position. Just like the bull lowers its horns to protect its belly, as we saw in the earlier example. The jellyfish does not take such action. It could move its tentacles between it and the attacker, or it could lift its tentacles up to protect its weak inner body, but it does none of these things. It becomes apparent that jellyfish do not take deliberate action to sustain themselves, while other animals do. Still, the jellyfish survives and even thrives because its tentacles allow it to. Even though it is incapable of acting in such a way as to sustain itself, the mere presence of the tentacles is enough for most predators to be discouraged. Jellyfish can go very long without food, so the lack of active hunting does not seem to form a problem for it either. It simply waits to get lucky for its next meal. The continued existence of jellyfish, then, is not due to appropriate action for survival but rather a favourable combination of form and habitat.

Because of this, I argue that the Stoics would not have classified a jellyfish as an animal at all, but rather as a plant. Carnivorous plants behave in much the same way as

³⁶ Jellyfish 'swim' in as much as their natural mode of existence is a continuous rhythm of contraction in the lower-ring muscles. For most species of jellyfish this 'swimming' is not directed anywhere specific and often follows the oceanic currents. I therefore elected to use the word 'float' to signal the lack of intention.

³⁷ Some Jellyfish have a 'fast mode' of swimming which activates when certain conditions are met. However, since the jellyfish is unable to perceive it is in danger, this mode is not strictly an escape tool. Additionally, since many jellyfish have no way of altering their course or seeing where they are going, I would argue that swimming slightly faster (but still very slow relative to any predator) in the same direction is not enough to constitute as self-preserving behaviour.

jellyfish do. Take the well-known Venus flytrap: it waits for prey to come to them and activates its weapons in a reflex to catch it and consume it. Additionally, when in danger, the plant is unaware and does not take action to preserve itself. The only real difference is that jellyfish move around. The movement of jellyfish, however, is automatic and constant, similar to a heartbeat in other creatures. Although it is true that plants do not have a constant repeated movement of this kind, they can in fact move. The aforementioned Venus flytrap moves suddenly and swiftly to close its 'cage' around its prey. The prayer plant folds its leaves at night and the telegraph plant (also known as the dancing plant) moves its leaves up and down throughout the day. Movement is therefore not a sufficient base to distinguish plants from animals.

As discussed in the first chapter, all things consist of an active and a passive principle in the stoic model. Plants have an active principle, just like all other things. That of an animal, however, is more complex and known by a more common name (soul) to denote its difference from the active principles found in all other objects. Based on our observations, I think the active principle of a jellyfish shows more signs of being that of a certain type of sea plant than being that of an animal. It seems likely to me that the Stoics would argue similarly for other examples that likewise seek to undermine their primary belief that all animals have perception. In fact, it is no leap of logic to say that the Stoics could have argued that indeed all those things which have self-perception are animals.

The jellyfish, does not in fact pose a real threat to Hierocles' argument. If we accept the Stoic premise that all things are a physical mixture of the active and passive principles which are in perfect contact with each other, then indeed self-perception must be inherent in all creatures and form the necessary basis that inspires the first appropriation of any animal; the self.

Chapter 3 The Sufficiency of Self-Perception

I have discussed the necessity of self-perception for the emergence of self-appropriation. This discussion has led us to some fundamental beliefs held by the Hierocles. First, that self-preservative behaviour is informed by an animal's self-appropriation. Second, creatures can only be appropriated to themselves if they can perceive themselves. Third, that all animals are capable of self-perception. In fact, I believe that Hierocles would indeed have defended the notion that things which cannot perceive themselves cannot be classified as animals. If all animals must be able to perceive themselves, and all animals are appropriated to themselves, then surely the connection between self-perception and self-appropriation runs deeper than mere necessity. Could it be that self-perception is, in itself, sufficient for self-appropriation?

As I have discussed, Hierocles regarded the self as being the first appropriate thing for all animals, including humans. It is due to the inherent self-perception of animals that they are automatically appropriated to themselves, for they are pleased³⁸ with the perception they have of themselves. Appropriation to the self naturally arises directly after the perception of the self and does so, without fail, in all animals. It seems clear then, that we must accept that self-perception is sufficient for self-appropriation, as in those very first stages of life there is nothing else which might be reasonably responsible for the appropriation of the self.

There is no debate that appropriation of the self is the first appropriation in the sense of time. However, when Hierocles wrote of it being 'first' he could also be referring to it as 'most important'. In fact, most of the early contemporary philosophy on Hierocles seems to favour this interpretation³⁹. With good reason, for there is an obvious difference in quality between the statements. Not only is a first as 'most important' more philosophically interesting but from context it also seems to be the most probable interpretation. As such, I will be working from the assumption that the 'first appropriation' should be understood as the

³⁸ See quote on page 10.

³⁹ Klein, Jacob. "The Stoic Argument from Oikeiosis." In *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Volume 50*, 143-200. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

'most important amongst one's appropriations'. This interpretation, however, does bring some challenges to Hierocles' argument. In this next part I will discuss self-harm and suicide in animals. I will challenge the idea of the self as primary appropriation in four steps with four animals to serve as my examples.

If self-perception is inherently present in all animals, as I have shown, and self-perception is sufficient to create self-appropriation, as Hierocles hopes to prove, then it must follow that all creatures must be appropriated to themselves continuously. Such appropriation is an internal affair, however, and therefore not easily (dis)proven. Hierocles seeks to overcome this barrier by using what *is* available to him. He takes self-preserving behaviour to be a marker of self-appropriation, for a creature would only seek to preserve itself if it was informed by a sense of self-appropriation telling it that its life is valuable⁴⁰. If we accept Hierocles assumption, then we are at liberty to say that indeed all animals will act to preserve themselves. Why, then, do some animals hurt or even kill themselves? Why do we observe behaviour where creatures choose to wound themselves or even die if we are certain that all these creatures have an inherent sense of self-appropriation and self-preservation? Could it be because, in fact, all of these behaviours *are* informed by self-preservation?

First I must further specify the connection between self-appropriation and self-preservation, even though the connection is, in a way, a self-evident one. As stated before, the appropriation to the self involves a positive evaluation of the self.⁴¹ Naturally, one would wish to preserve things of value, so the self is well cared for. Hierocles also mentions the connection, although briefly, in the fragmented later part of *The Elements of Ethics*. I have left in the line numbers to illustrate how much text is missing.

"[40] simultaneous with its birth ... that an animal, during the first stages after its birth, moves forward so as to survive and preserve itself, [45] ... the so-called becoming one's own and familiar [appropriation], immediately ... impulse, and the above-mentioned becoming one's own and familiar is the self-conscious perception of what tends to one's own safety. That is why an animal is seen, simultaneous with its birth, to perceive itself and to become its own and familiar to itself and to [50] its own constitution."⁴²

It is clear that Hierocles himself was convinced that self-preservative behaviour was a direct result of self-appropriation. This should not come as a surprise, as Hierocles uses self-preservative behaviour as a sort of empirical marker that shows an animal is appropriated to

⁴⁰ See note 10.

⁴¹ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. VI.40-50. Also discussed in chapter 2 of this work

⁴² Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. VII. 40-50

itself. However, as was the case in the previous chapter, it seems that the empirical data again needs some close examination to be eligible as a proper premise to Hierocles' conclusion. Just as with the jellyfish, there are examples in nature that seem to counteract the idea that all animals act to preserve themselves. In a perfect example from earlier in *The Elements of Ethics* we find the description of the beaver that has seemingly learned why humans hunt its kind.

“For this creature, it seems to me, is not ignorant even of the parts for which it is pursued. For the reason human beings have for hunting it is its testicles, since castoreum, which is renowned among physicians, is just this part of the animal. And so, when it is being pursued, for a good while it contrives to run away healthy and intact; but if necessity should be too strong, it cuts off its testicles with its own teeth and tosses them away. And this puts an end to the hunt for those who are pursuing it, whereas for the animal it is the cause of its deliverance.”⁴³

This passage comes from a discussion about perception and appropriation of both the self *and* one's surroundings. We will get to that discussion later in this work. For now, however, this passage makes for a brilliant example in the current context. It shows that self-harm in the animal kingdom can be inspired by self-preservation. Rather than be killed, the beaver elects to mutilate itself in order to survive. It has learned that it does not need to die if it gives up a part of its body, and so it will. For its first appropriation is its own life, and so, pain is preferable over death. Whether it is true that this behaviour was indeed observed in beavers during that time is unimportant. What matters is that Hierocles believes it to be valid empirical data. There are other examples like it, that are beyond doubt and that serve the same purpose. The most directly available example is human amputation of limbs to preserve life. It is abundantly clear that the continuation of life is of the utmost priority. The quality of that life and the health of the body are secondary concerns. Although self-harm makes for a striking footnote to Hierocles' concept of self-preservation, it does not strictly go against it. But there is other animal behaviour that could.

Perhaps the most directly apparent of these is the bee. The bee, in order to defend its home and queen, will fight off any intruder by using its stinger. The sting of a bee is merely painful for most other animals, but it is fatal for the bee itself. Due to its grip-hook form, the stinger of a bee will remain stuck in its target. When the bee flies away, it rips the stinger from its lower body. This violent removal of part of its body is almost always fatal to the bee. In practice this means that, in using its only weapon, a bee will sacrifice its life to protect others of its kind. This sort of behaviour seems inexplicable in the Stoic system,

⁴³ Hierocles *Elements of Ethics*. III. 10-15.

where all animals are firstly appropriated to *themselves* and wish to preserve their own lives above all. One might find an explanation in the idea of social animals. Bees, like humans, are social animals that live in groups to improve their chances of survival. In Stoicism as a whole, there is a returning idea that the whole and its parts are closely tied together⁴⁴. Hierocles himself seems to give priority to the whole over the parts, while still insisting on the closeness of their bond. One could argue that the bees are aware they are parts of a whole. As such, a bee's self-preservative behaviour might be informed by an internal sense of the priority of the whole over the parts. In such an interpretation the suicidal protection of the beehive might be explained by a misguided action informed by self-preservation. The bee has tied its own survival to that of the group. It will therefore risk injury and death by fighting anything that threatens the hive, using the weapons that are available to it. Additionally, while there is no doubt that bee is aware that it has a weapon, it might not be fully aware of the certain doom it spells for the wielder upon use. While the soul perceives the body and its parts, making sure that the bee is aware of its weapon, it does not necessarily allow for the knowledge of what it will do when used. The bee's suicidal protection of the hive, then, seems to be an action informed by self-preservation regardless of the certainty of death. Either because the bee values its existence as part of a whole, or simply because the bee is unaware of the side-effects of its attack. There remains room for animals to indeed act solely with the goal of self-preservation, but the argument now rests on our guess at the psychology of a bee.

Lastly, I want to introduce a real counterexample and discuss the great pacific octopus. The females of this species will mate and reproduce only once in their life. When the time comes, they find a cave to lay their many thousands of eggs and hide their offspring. When the octopus has finished laying her eggs, she will not leave their side. Not for food, nor for danger, under no circumstance will she leave her offspring. Until her eggs hatch, between one and two months after they are laid, her only action is gently using her breath and tentacles to keep the water around them in constant flow. This prevents algae from growing on the eggs and killing her unborn children. Typically, the octopus dies of starvation at the end of this period. The giant pacific octopus chooses the life of her offspring over her own and *willingly* perishes to give the next generation the best possible chance at survival. Unlike the beaver, the octopus chooses to give up her life. She cannot be unaware of the effects of her actions, like the bee possibly is, for she has a stomach and muscles so her soul will perceive her hunger grow and her strength fade. The octopus *chooses* to make the ultimate sacrifice because, apparently, the survival of her offspring is more important to

⁴⁴ For a more detailed discussion surrounding the idea of 'wholes and parts' in stoicism see Gass, Michael. "Eudaimonism and Theology in Stoic Accounts of Virtue". *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61. 2000: 19–37.

her than her own life. But how can that be? If all creatures are self-appropriated and therefore wish to preserve themselves, then why does the octopus not seem to do so? While in Stoic texts we cannot find a wholly satisfying answer, there is a Platonic notion that applies perfectly. In the *Symposium* Plato describes why animals and humans care so much for their offspring.

“And they are ready to fight to the finish, the weakest against the strongest, for the sake of those they have generated, and to die on their behalf; and they are willingly racked by starvation and stop at nothing to nourish their offspring. One might suppose that human beings do this from calculation; but as for beasts, what is the cause of their erotic disposition’s being of this sort? [...] The mortal nature seeks as far as possible to be forever and immortal. Mortal nature is capable of immortality only in this way, the way of generation, because it is always leaving behind another that is young to replace the old.”⁴⁵

Plato argues that animals seem on some level aware of their own mortality, as well as the idea that their offspring generally outlives them. Because they will not live forever, creatures generate and protect offspring as a sort of approach to immortality. Knowing that a part of them will live on in their children. It is with this line of reasoning that the Stoic argument on self-preservation might be saved. One could argue that, even in those few cases where an animal chooses death willingly, it does so due to the drive to preserve itself. In a way, the protection of offspring is a sort of investment in the future. A guarantee that part of the self will live on, even after death. At least, Plato seems to think so. What the Stoics themselves would have thought of Plato’s writings is hard to say. Given the compatibility with their own ideas and the otherwise untreated void in their argument, I would argue that Stoics could and indeed *should* have incorporated Plato’s idea in their own philosophy.

The importance of offspring forms a true challenge to the idea that all animals are firstly appropriated to themselves. For a fourth and final example, let us discuss the most intelligent of all animals, humans. Humans are also known for generally being very protective of their offspring. Most parents will do anything to preserve the life of their child, including risking their lives. In that respect, humans show the same troublesome behaviour as other animals, but the reason for this behaviour is harder to pin down. One can question if protective behaviour regarding one’s child is purely informed by a need for self-preservation. Indeed, I think most would not accept that parental love is merely inspired by the egoistic

⁴⁵ Benardete, Seth, and Allan David Bloom. *Plato's Symposium*. 2001. Pg. 38

desire for immortality. To take this line of thought one step further; could we not say that, in understanding man as an intelligent animal, other animals with high intelligence could perhaps feel similar emotions of love and care towards their offspring? Feelings strong enough such that, like humans, there could be more to the octopus' ultimate sacrifice for their protection than self-preservation alone. If so, where would that leave Hierocles' argument? Can love for others override the love of the self? If it can in humans, could it do so in other animals too? Such questions I will not address further here, for they would throw us off the current course of investigation. Presently, I am concerned with the question whether self-perception alone is sufficient for self-appropriation. We have seen that in most cases self-perception seems sufficient indeed, although less apparent in some than in others. The octopus and us humans, however, remain a subject of debate. For some reason or other, these creatures sometimes choose others over themselves for no clear self-preserving reason.

Like octopuses humans can choose death over life, but the circumstances in which they do can be drastically different. Some people choose to end their lives prematurely without the context of protecting their offspring, seemingly making the argument for self-appropriation impossible. However, one must remember that suicide is an ultimate and desperate final act to relieve the self of suffering⁴⁶. In a way then, we might say that even suicide is an act of self-preservation, or at least self-appropriation. We care for the quality of life and will act to increase it. When the quality of life is very low for a long time, and the agent is completely convinced there is no other option, one might resort to suicide to relief the self of suffering. In a twisted way, the permanent termination of the self is seen as the best remaining option to preserve it. One could write only these things and be rid of this ghastly topic, but it would not be proper nor complete. There are many cases of suicide that seem to be informed rather by a sense of honour and tradition. Ritual suicide to atone for sin or shame was a cultural phenomenon in the Roman Empire and the Japanese Shogunate⁴⁷. One can still argue that suicide is informed by self-preservation, even in these cases, but one would be stretching the limits of the imagination. Such an argument would claim that the prospect of shame is a form of suffering perceived to be so terrible that one is willing to lay down one's life to prevent [the chance of] it. I do not believe that to be convincing. Rather, I

⁴⁶ There are cases of suicide to prevent suffering. Both of the self and of others. One example would be spies who kill themselves rather than be tortured during questioning.

⁴⁷ Such traditions were mostly upheld by military man in both cultures. Although rare in the Roman Empire, being only reserved for the greatest of military failures, ritual suicide to uphold honour was common in Japan. Fuse, Toyomasa. "Suicide and Culture in Japan: a Study of Seppuku as an Institutionalized Form of Suicide." *Social Psychiatry* 15, 1980: 57-63.

and
Rauh, S. H. "The Tradition of Suicide in Rome's Foreign Wars." *TAPA Vol. 145, No.2*, 2015: 383-410.

would question the agency with which these choices are made. In some cultures, one can feel socially forced to do certain things. Even when it goes against his very nature, a Samurai might choose to honour his tradition in defeat by performing ritual suicide. Not because he wants to, but because he believes that he *should*. The choice to do so remains his, but his judgement has been severely affected by his social situation. Still, the existence of these kinds of traditions poses a problem. Even the questioning of agency leads us to conclude that there must be things strong enough to overwrite our natural state of active self-preservation. It seems that we can become appropriated to things like our children, our nation, or our god with enough intensity that it overtakes our first appropriation in importance.

What does this mean for perception and appropriation? There are two answers. One might choose to conclude that the existence of something able to overpower our sense of self-appropriation makes for the impossibility of self-perception being sufficient for it. Since there are moments where one has self-perception yet acts against the self in favour of some other appropriation, it is clear that self-perception is not necessarily followed by self-appropriation. In this case, one would follow the train of thought of the early contemporary scholars on Hierocles, who believed that the 'first' appropriate thing denoted the 'most important' appropriation. As I have shown, perception of the self does not necessitate a continuous self-appropriation in this way.

Alternatively, one might conclude that one's first appropriation does not indefinitely remain the most important. As discussed at the start of this chapter, if one chooses to interpret the 'first' appropriation in the sense of time rather than importance, one circumvents the challenges detailed here. An animal's first appropriation in time will always be the self, for Hierocles leaves no space for alternative interpretations. In life after this first moment, however, other appropriations might take precedence. To animals one such appropriation might be offspring, to humans it might be reason. This interpretation asserts that self-perception *is* sufficient for self-appropriation, but only in as much as self-appropriation is the 'first' amongst appropriation in time, not importance.

It seems that perception alone cannot defend self-appropriation as being the most important by necessity. If one interprets the 'first' appropriation to be the most important, one would have to accept that the self cannot be first amongst the appropriations at all times. If one interprets the 'first' appropriation to be the first in time, one has already accepted that other appropriations might come after it and transcend it in importance. It seems clear then, that we can conclude that Hierocles leaves no room for true egoism. The appropriation to the self, although first amongst the appropriations, can be overtaken. In other words, a creature can find something that is more important to it than its own life.

The introduction of a third interpretation changes these conclusions significantly. In his paper *The Stoic Argument From Oikeiosis*, Klein puts forth his theory that the idea of self-appropriation is regarding the appropriation and preservation of one's constitution, not just one's life. Klein seems to take a page out of Aristotle and takes the constitution of an animal to include everything that allows it to function as is proper for it in nature. Besides its life, the constitution of an animal therefore includes its behaviour and its proper place in nature. The contents of what makes up a creature's constitution is also subject to change over time, allowing the importance of different appropriations to shift as the creature advances in age. This allows Klein to argue that the first appropriation of humans is both the first in time *and* the first in importance, for it is the appropriation to our constitution. At first, our constitution is animal-like and ego-centric. Our proper function in nature is survival and safety, like other animals. Upon coming of age, however, the human constitution slowly changes to include virtue. Virtue becomes the proper function of humans in nature and overtakes care for one's life as the most important goal of existence⁴⁸. Although the contents of our constitution change, we remain first and foremost appropriated to that constitution. This leads me to conclude that, if we make use of Klein's theory, we *can* argue that perception is sufficient for self-appropriation.

An additional benefit to Klein's theory is its scope. In the classic interpretations of Hierocles' texts there is no proper explanation for behaviour that does not increase the chance of survival. Klein, however, allows for this kind of behaviour by incorporating it into the animal's constitution. This creates a far greater range of animal behaviours that are explicable in the stoic model. Klein's theory allows for all behaviours that can be understood as a part of the animal's function in nature yet are not a direct result of the desire to preserve the self. Indeed, in this way, Klein might even have room for all animal behaviour. Further on in his paper Klein couples his theory to the concept of perception and cognition in the Stoic model. As I have explained in the first chapter, correct action comes from giving assent to the right perceptions. If one correctly identifies a true perception as true, one can act properly. Klein argues that self-perception is the gateway to an animal's constitution. Through it, an animal can come to know its constitution and, upon successful cognition, act on it properly.

Klein's interpretation allows self-perception to be sufficient for self-appropriation. Self-appropriation, however, will not be sufficient for self-preservation, as the changing nature of an animal's constitution makes it such that something other than the creature's survival might take precedence. Note that this outcome does not clash with Hierocles'

⁴⁸ Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers Vol. 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pg. 377-386

method of argumentation. Although self-appropriation does not necessarily produce self-preservation, this does not affect Hierocles' claims that self-preservation is necessarily produced by self-appropriation. Therefore, Hierocles' use of self-preserving behaviour as an empirical marker for self-appropriation remains valid. With Klein, we can defend the presence of self-appropriation, even in the absence of self-preservation.

Chapter 4 Perception and Social Appropriation

I have so far discussed the connection between self-perception and self-appropriation. It is clear that perception plays a vital role in the self-appropriation and subsequent self-preservation of any animal. It is not only a necessary but perhaps even sufficient element in the creation of the first appropriation of any creature. Therefore, to Hierocles, it forms the very foundation of life. I shall now venture outwards from the self into the social and investigate the role of perception in the interaction between individuals.

In *The Elements of Ethics* Hierocles is, for the most part, not concerned with human relations. It serves as a foundational text that shows where appropriation first comes from and how it manifests. After his explanation on the origins of appropriation Hierocles can progress to detailing the bonds that people actually have. In his work *On Appropriate Acts* Hierocles is above all concerned with the kinds of relations we (ought to) have as humans. Having already written a separate text with the metaphysical groundwork, Hierocles is not concerned with explaining the 'how' and 'why' of human relations. *On Appropriate Acts* is a collection of ethical statements, more than anything else. Still, I shall analyse this text and seek to find and fill the gaps in Hierocles' reasoning, as I have done with the other work.

In a passage about the relation between siblings Hierocles gives us a glimpse at what he believes to be the most important element for creating appropriations. First he explains how siblings, and other members of the household, act as our natural appropriations. We are not born alone, but rather we are born with allies⁴⁹. As I have discussed at the start of this work, the literal meaning of *oikeiosis* is to make someone part

⁴⁹ Hierocles. The Stobaeian Extracts from *On Appropriate Acts*. [Siblings].

of the house[hold]. It is no surprise then, that Hierocles takes the members of the actual household (*oikos*) to be automatically part of that group. He continues by stating that, by nature, this includes one's parents and siblings, but over time our 'household' (*oikeios*) grows as we appropriate other people into it.

“Reason, too, is a great aid, which appropriates strangers and those wholly unrelated to us by blood and provides us with an abundance of allies. For this reason, we are eager by nature to win over and make a friend of everyone.”⁵⁰

We use reason to appropriate other people when they are not tied to us by nature. Although perception played a central role in the appropriation of the self in *The Elements of Ethics*, there is no longer any mention of it here. Instead, reason alone seems to be the basis for social appropriation. Such a shift is significant, for the importance of reason produces an interesting question: Does Hierocles believe that other animals cannot have appropriations outside of their family? In *The Elements of Ethics* Hierocles only ever argues for animals perceiving and thereby appropriating to themselves⁵¹. Based on what has been said in the previous chapter, one might accept that animals are also appropriated to their direct family⁵². But since animals do not possess reason, they would not be able to appropriate themselves to others outside of their family. Such a conclusion seems impossible. Other animals, especially those with relatively high intelligence, *can* form complex social structures that transcend simple familial ties⁵³. Dolphins, for example, are known to not only hunt together and protect each other, but even play games and enjoy other leisure activities together. Some species of dolphin are even known to team up to create a 'dance squad' to increase their chances of finding a mate⁵⁴. The dolphins that form these groups are appropriated to each other for the rest of their lives. Important to note is that these dolphin friendships are between individuals from different groups that find each other during certain times of the year, when multiple groups of dolphins gather on the same shore. The individuals in these relations are not only from different families but completely different groups.

How do we account for friendships and other such non-familial relations in the animal kingdom? As discussed in the first chapter, animals might be allowed to have some form of

⁵⁰ *Idem*.

⁵¹ Note that social animals, like the bee, are not appropriated to their social group. They protect it because they are part of the whole, and the whole must survive if the parts are to have a chance.

⁵² Humans are appropriated to their family, even at the young non-rational state of their development. Seeing as humans, at that point, have no capacities distinguishing them from any other animal, it is safe to say that the appropriation to direct family is a trait shared by other animals.

⁵³ Connor, R. C., M. Krützen, S. J. Allen, S. L. King, and W. B. Sherwin. “Strategic intergroup alliances increase access to a contested resource in male bottlenose dolphins.” *PNAS* Vol.119 , 2022: No.36.

⁵⁴ *Animal: Dolphins*. Director: Anuschka Schofield. 2022.

'quasi-conceptual understanding'⁵⁵. This would allow them to choose their interactions from time to time. Instead of always existing in complete 'auto-pilot', some perceptions would not instantly move the animal to action but would rather stimulate the animal in a way such that it can recognize (parts of) the perceived. In this case, we might say that some animals might perhaps recognize sounds and shapes similar to those of their family as 'friendly'. For a proper explanation of the dolphin behaviour, we would need a little more complex quasi-concepts. At the very least, these animals would need to be able to recognize those of the same age and sex as them. Additionally, they would need the quasi-concept of 'friend' or 'family' and the ability to add others to it. Quite literally, we would need to accept that these dolphins have the power of *oikeiosis*. A power which, according to Hierocles, is firmly unique to humans due to its dependency on reason.

Instead, Klein might once again provide a solution. If we were to accept his theory, the above-mentioned kinds of behaviour can be explained. In Klein's theory, the dolphins would not need reason to make friends. Instead, making friends and spending leisure time together can simply be filed as 'part of the creature's constitution'. Interpreted this way, any behaviour can be explained with the animal's perception of its own constitution without the need for concepts or reason. One would need to accept that dolphins possess a constitution that apparently includes friendship⁵⁶. In this way, Klein would allow perception to remain the basis of all animal behaviour.

Unlike other animals, reason, rather than perception, seems to be the driving force behind human appropriation. Hierocles himself clearly considers reason to be sufficient for human appropriation. In fact, it seems to me that he would be unable to defend any real need for perception in a human context at all. At first, Hierocles writes about the creation of friendships with examples that do require perception. This could lead the reader to believe that Hierocles still builds his argument on that same structure as in the *Elements*. However, if one were to argue that besides reason, perception too is indeed needed to create appropriations, one would arrive at strange conclusions. Hierocles himself argues that we are (or at least should be) appropriated to our country and the gods. We can have no direct perception of these things, yet it seems Hierocles believes that we can become appropriated to them. In other words, we can become appropriated to things we do not perceive. I recognize that in stoic metaphysics, concepts such as the gods and the motherland are physical entities⁵⁷. As such, there is no *real* impossibility of direct perception. In theory, the

⁵⁵ Brittain, Charles. "Non-Rational Perception in the Stoics and Augustine." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. Vol.22, 2002: 253-308.

⁵⁶ A concept that is not so far-fetched. Good relations and play with others of the same age help develop unique reflexes and strengthen the bond of communication. Valuable tools for survival.

⁵⁷ Long, A. A., and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers Vol. 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pg. 162-179.

gods could come down and show themselves to mortals, as they often do in the stories. Likewise, one could theoretically walk over every part of one's homeland to perceive everything and everyone in it. In practice however, such things do not happen and direct perception of the gods or the homeland do not precede one's appropriation to them. The idea of perception as the base for social appropriations is, therefore, indefensible for Hierocles.

While reason does still suffer from the inability to account for animal friendships, it makes for a better power of appropriation than perception. Simply because perception cannot be necessary for it. Hierocles therefore continues his philosophy by using reason alone. Immediately after discussing our relations with the gods, our parents and our siblings, he writes of our relations to all other relatives⁵⁸. In this section, we find arguably the most famous part of Hierocles' philosophy; the rings of appropriation. Hierocles argues that our relations can be visualised as rings. It starts with the inner ring which only contains the agent, as the first appropriate thing is the self. The next ring contains close relations by nature such as parents and siblings. Then come further blood relations, and maybe the best of friends. From there, the rings get larger and further away, containing an increasing amount of people to whom we are appropriated in a decreasing intensity. The outermost ring contains all human beings to which, it is implied, we hold the weakest of appropriations, probably that of 'being a fellow human'. Then he continues:

"Once these have been *thought through*, accordingly, it is possible, starting with the most stretched-out one, to draw the circles – concerning the behaviour that is due to each group – together in a way, as though toward the centre, and with an effort to keep transferring items out of the containing circles into the contained."⁵⁹

Reason, Hierocles seems to argue, is how we can create ethics. When one uses proper reason, one will be able to treat the people in outer rings with the respect and care that one would normally extend only to those in the ring contained in it. Additionally, one can use reason to completely move people⁶⁰ from one ring to another. This effectively means that Hierocles believes reason to be the power that drives our ability to act out *oikeiosis*. For the moving of people inwards through the rings of appropriation means that some will indeed end up in the inner rings which constitute the household. The act of appropriation is precisely

⁵⁸ The term 'relative' is strikingly accurate in the model of *oikeiosis*. Those who we are appropriated to are 'part of the house[hold]'. It is no stretch to argue that Hierocles meant to convey that all those appropriated to us are, in a way, family. Only to show directly after that we should be appropriated to everyone, making all of humanity our family. The idea of family is perfect, as it necessitates a certain bond, but that bond can be of any strength. The term 'relative' is a way to denote the existence of a bond without commenting on the strength of said bond.

⁵⁹ Hierocles. The Stobaeon Extracts from *On Appropriate Acts*. [Relatives]

⁶⁰ Hierocles uses the term 'items' but it is clear that he means people.

this; to move people from outer rings into an inner ring that, by nature, is reserved for family.

Hierocles has no need for perception in this model of appropriation. For instance, note how one can only fill the rings with reason. No human has ever perceived all other people in existence, so the outer ring at the very least is filled with an indeterminate (indeed, ever-changing) amount of people that one has not perceived before, but to whom one is nonetheless appropriated in some small way. In fact, quantitatively, the majority of our appropriations are built on reason alone. Nor is perception needed for the activity of appropriation, in which we move people from one ring to another closer to us. For if we would need perception for this act, the virtue system would collapse. Hierocles *needs* reason alone to be enough for adopting all people in the outer ring into the next to achieve the classic Stoic cosmopolitan ideal.

One might seek to argue that perception seems to still play an important role in the inner circles. One needs to know the other in order to become closely appropriated to them. If not for family, then at least for close friends. I find such an argument unconvincing due to the existence of pen-pals and online friendship. One needs not directly perceive another to become closely appropriated to them. One might also bring up the animalistic soul present in humans who have yet to come of age. These young souls are not yet capable of reason but are still said to have strong appropriations. It seems to me that Hierocles is at least partly prepared for this critique, as he specifically writes that the bond one has with one's family is one given by nature. This inherent bond seems to need neither perception nor reason but is instead an automatic connection already felt during infancy. Still, young people can start friendships, some of which can last a lifetime. Would Hierocles really go so far as to argue that these bonds of friendship are in some way 'fake' at first? That true friendship can only blossom between adults that have developed their reason? If not reason, what *does* cause us to feel these 'fake' appropriations to others? Is it perhaps the same perception that brings the dolphins together?

One possibility is that animal 'friendship' and human appropriation are indeed wholly different, including their point of origin. While human appropriation is born from reason with the goal of virtue, animal appropriation is born from perception with the goal of survival. Although I have argued that, for some animals, survival of their offspring might take precedence, the main appropriation of animals remains the self. Closest to the self are members of one's family, who Hierocles describes as "allies". A fittingly ego-centric term for a creature that is only really appropriated to itself. Non-familial bonds with other animals are not impossible in Hierocles' worldview, however. As we have discussed, there are many species of social animals of which humans are but one. These creatures work together to increase their chances of survival in all relevant capacities. Non-rational humans are social animals just the same as dolphins, so it stands to reason that they too surround themselves

with others to increase their chances of survival. The difference between them exists in what the *relevant* capacities are. Because humans no longer live in the natural state, the threats they face have changed. Yet, the same applies to them as to all social animals. Although most of the natural threats to human life cannot be addressed by children⁶¹, there are other, non-lethal, threats that *can* be mediated by friendship with others. Shame, loneliness, heartache and many other things are threats to our well-being. For non-rational people goes the same as for all social animals. Working together decreases the threats to (the quality of) life and is, therefore, inherently desirable.

Once again, the story changes if we follow Klein. In his interpretation, there is no difference between the appropriations of the animalistic and the reasonable. At first, he follows Hierocles in his concepts of animal (self)appropriation, built on perception with the goal of survival. However, to Klein, survival is not a goal because the animal is appropriated to itself, but rather because it is appropriated to its own constitution. Life is part of that constitution and thus all the same self-preserving behaviours apply, but as the animal grows older the details of its constitution are subject to change. In the case of humans, this change is dramatic. The constitution that starts with elements such as 'eat when you are hungry' changes as the person comes of age. As reason develops, the constitution changes to include such elements as 'help others' and seek justice'. The more one's reason develops, the more one comes to realise that one's constitution includes all elements that make for a virtuous person. To Klein, the development of people into rational agents is like the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. The individual remains the same, but its proper function in nature undergoes a dramatic change. The only explanation for how any animal is expected to identify proper action to its newly developed form is by inherent knowledge of the new arrangement of its constitution. Klein argues that, if we understand the appropriation to the self as an appropriation to one's constitution and everything contained therein, we are able to explain any behaviour and development, both animalistic and human, by virtue of self-perception alone. The proper perception of one's constitution will always lead to the knowledge of how to act properly for one's current state. The use of reason is merely part of the constitution of a typical adult human. Still, perception is fallible and especially in the case of humans who can choose whether to grant their assent to a perception or not. As such, Klein also introduces an explanation for the imperfect nature of reason⁶².

⁶¹ By the time of Hierocles writing, humanity had far surpassed the need for friendship as a tool to protect against wild animals and dangerous terrain. The natural threats left to human life, such as disease, cannot be addressed by children for they have no knowledge on how to do so.

⁶² Although normal animals are only subject to faulty perceptions of the outside, humans are also subject to misinterpretation of their perception of the inside. Non-rational animals lack the power of assent and will therefore assume any perception (inwards and outwards) to be true and act accordingly. Human reason allows us to doubt perception from the inside but can therefore get in the way of acting properly in accordance with nature.

Hierocles was convinced of the following: that reason is necessary for one to form appropriations and to change said appropriations in accordance with ethics. Additionally, Hierocles must accept that one does not need direct perception of the person that one becomes appropriated to. He is aware that it is certainly customary that people perceive each other before appropriating the other in their inner circles. However, such perceptions only serve to strengthen our understanding of the other person. They are not strictly necessary. Although Hierocles has no further need for perception in this classic interpretation, one could alternatively elect to follow Klein's theory. In doing so, one would argue that reason is the basis for appropriation, as Hierocles argues, but perception is the basis for reason. For the activity of reason is part of our constitution and can thus only be properly applied when preceded by a correct inwards perception of one's constitution.

Conclusion

In this paper is outlined the role of perception in Hierocles' philosophy. First and most obvious, perception is considered necessary to create the first appropriation; the appropriation to the self. Without it, no animal would be able to know themselves, let alone become appropriated. Additionally, in the Stoic understanding of the active and passive principle, the absence of self-perception would be an impossibility. For the soul is always in complete contact with the body, thereby physically perceiving the whole and all parts of it along with its perceptions of the outside.

Second, perception can be understood as sufficient for creating the first perception. This can only be allowed, however, if one does *not* follow the classic interpretation of the 20th century scholars on Hierocles. They are credible in their belief that the 'first' of the appropriations denotes the "most important". This interpretation, however, cannot hold perception as a sufficient tool to sustain such an appropriation. For there are undeniable instances, both in non-rational animals as in humans, where perception of the self does not present it as the most important among one's appropriations. There are two alternative interpretations which *can* support the sufficiency of perception for the first appropriation. One could argue that 'first' denotes the "first in time". Unfortunately, such an interpretation proves of little consequence, as it is of little philosophical significance and difficult to defend when reading Hierocles. Alternatively, one could accept Klein's interpretation which combines both versions of 'first' by arguing that one is not appropriated to the self, but to one's own constitution. This interpretation allows Klein to define the constitution of a creature in such a way that it holds multiple things and is subject to change. Due to the malleable and complex nature of the constitution, Klein can defend all animalistic *and* human behaviour as being

informed by the perception of one's constitution, which contains all elements for one to act properly in accordance with nature.

Third, the role of perception in human ethics seems to be forgotten by Hierocles. He seems to be concerned only with the bonds we have, how we should act on them, and how we can make them stronger and more numerous. Upon moving my analysis from one text to the other, I find that Hierocles no longer mentions perception in any capacity. Indeed, when one observes the theory of the concentric circles of attachment, which should converge to the middle with the power of *oikeiosis*, one must accept that such a structure can only be built on reason. This leaves Hierocles open to attack regarding the social bonds amongst children, who have not yet developed reason. A similar problem can be raised with regard to certain animals, for they can form appropriations outside their families. Perception is left unmentioned, and the power of reason that takes its place leads to an ethics system that leaves much to be desired. Klein's theory can reintroduce perception, even to this part of Hierocles' philosophy. Understanding reason as a natural power of humans, one could argue that reason is part of the adult human constitution. As such, all Hierocles' arguments still stand, but reason itself is built on perception. The failure to use reason properly is thereby also accounted for, by virtue of the fallibility of perception and assent.

I have analysed and explained the role of perception in all parts of Hierocles' philosophy. Where relevant I have considered the known interpretations of debated definitions and detailed the role of perception as it would be should we accept them. With the help of Klein's work, I have even formulated a possible role of perception in *On Appropriate Acts*, a text in which the word 'perception' is never mentioned. With this analysis I hope to lay the groundwork for future research into Hierocles. Such research might include the possibility of reading Hierocles as an egoist. With perception and an appropriation to the self as basis for his philosophy, it would be interesting to see whether true egoism could be extended from Hierocles' animal kingdom into human society.

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