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The educative and therapeutic function of Stoicism in Senecan tragedy

Fani Goutsiou

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Classics and Ancient History

Durham University

2025

Abstract

The longstanding scholarly debate on the relation between Seneca's tragedies and his philosophical compositions has caused many disputes among scholars divided into three main groups. According to the traditional anti-Stoic view, Seneca *tragicus* cannot be Seneca *philosophus* since they diametrically differ due to the intense presence and the triumph of excessive emotions over reason, which infuse the plays and come in contradiction to the Stoic moral principle that passions need to be extirpated. Therefore, the Stoic use of poetic examples seems to be paradoxical. However, a significant proportion of scholars detect philosophical aspects within the plays, including non-Stoic influences such as Platonic and Aristotelian or psychoanalytical. The third group of scholars argue in favour of a wholly Stoic reading of the plays. The current thesis places Senecan drama within a Stoic tradition of philosophers employing poetry to serve their ethical purposes. Furthermore, it aims to demonstrate the educative function of Seneca's drama through Seneca's use of tragic *exempla* of Stoic moral principles and by analysing the tragic characters as case studies to construct their psychological portraiture in line with Stoicism. The educative role of the plays is substantiated through 1) Seneca's acceptance of the soul's monistic and cognitive nature, which allows for a view of passions as wrong judgments and false beliefs about *indifferentia*, which are things of no intrinsic value, 2) Seneca's use of poetry as an educational means, 3) the chorus's and minor characters' guiding role towards Stoic messages through *sententiae* and admonition against passions 4) the educative use of the physical manifestation of *ira* and *furor* within the plays, 5) the illustration of *furor* as an ingrained process stemming from intense emotions, which renders the agent responsible for their mental state and actions, and 6) the tragic exemplification of the need for reason to interfere by rejecting the erroneous judgements based on improperly placed values on *indifferentia* and dependence on fickle *Fortuna*.

Ph.D. Thesis

The educative and therapeutic function of Stoicism in Senecan tragedy

Department of Classics and Ancient History

Fani Goutsiou

Primary Supervisors: Nathan Gilbert & Erica Bexley
Secondary Supervisor: Andrea Capra

2025

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To my parents and George.

Allegory of Fortune

Salvator Rosa, J. Paul Getty Museum in Brentwood, Los Angeles.

Introduction

There is a longstanding scholarly debate on the compatibility between Seneca's philosophical prose and his drama. In the earlier centuries, most scholars rejected the idea that the works of the two genres belonged to the same author as they presented significant differences in philosophical integrity and theoretical background. The main obstacle which scholars thought to be impenetrable was the intensely emotional character of the tragedies in contrast to the philosophical Stoic principle of ἀπάθεια, which is a mental state of peacefulness lacking any trace of passion. Durant, for instance, talks about 'philosophic indifference' and 'apathetic acceptance of defeat' as traits of Stoicism.[1] However, the apparently emotionless nature of Stoic philosophy is a common misconception and misinterpretation of Stoicism, which, contrary to public opinion, embraces a certain range of passions and dispositions called εὐπαθείαι. Nevertheless, the extreme presence of passions, vice and evil in the plays, contrary to the Stoic principle promoting a life free from excessive impulses and emotional upheavals, is a valid obstacle to a possible harmonisation of Seneca's prose and poetry. Why do the protagonists in each tragedy believe in their bad reasoning and impulses, which makes them indulge in their passions? Why does evil always triumph at the end of the plot? These are legitimate concerns, which the current thesis endeavours to answer in favour of a Stoic reading of Seneca's tragedies.

Before proceeding to the display of the methodology followed here concerning the way I am to prove how the predominance of evil in Seneca's plays does not exclude a Stoic and educative interpretation, it would be helpful to lay the groundwork for the existing debate among the scholars with regard to the various possible types of reading of Seneca's drama. Scholars are divided into three main categories: 1) those who offer an anti-Stoic reading of the plays, 2) those who philosophically approach the plays but not under Stoic principles necessarily, and 3) those who defend a pro-Stoic reading.

In the first category, a Stoic interpretation of the plays is ultimately contradictory since there cannot be coherence and common ground between a philosophical system which promotes a passion-free and virtuous manner of living (and dying) and tragic plots which depict the triumph of passions, emotional turbulence, evil, madness and crime with such vehemence. Some of the opponents of an anti-Stoic reading are Richard Tarrant,[2] Elaine Fantham,[3] John Fitch,[4] Roland Mayer,[5] Harry Hine,[6] Motto and Clark.[7] These scholars share the view that Seneca did not write his tragedies from a Stoic point of view. In a significant part, their argumentation was based on the discontinuity of the aesthetic form of his period and Seneca's writing,[8] their conflicting rhetorical

[1] Durant 1928, pp. 108–110.
[2] Tarrant 1976.
[3] Fantham 1982.
[4] Fitch 1987.
[5] Mayer 2002.
[6] Hine 2000; Hine 1995, pp. 93–106.
[7] Motto and Clark 1973, pp. 219–35.
[8] Fantham 1982, p. 15. See also Boyle 1997 for an analysis of Seneca's aesthetical and rhetorical culture as influenced by the Julio-Claudian period drama.

forms,[9] and the differences between Roman and Greek drama.[10] Further objections to a Stoic reading of the tragedies would be Hine's remarks about Seneca's silence about his poetics; there is no evidence or analysis of philosophical poetics in Seneca's prose.[11] Furthermore, Hine believes that Seneca is inconsistent regarding the educative function of his plays and that his ambivalence on the matter could not guide a Stoic message conveyed to the audience.[12] Most disagreeable to Stoicism, though, would be the disharmony, as mentioned earlier, between the content of the plays and the doctrines of Seneca's philosophy; evil and passions prove to triumph in the end, passions are excessively manifested, and they consume the protagonists' soul and, and last but not least, the excessive emotional reaction to what Fortune throws at them seems to be a common and acceptable response.[13] The first group of scholars seem to adhere to the aesthetical aspect of Seneca's drama and their relation to contemporary or earlier literary genres. However, they are missing the philosophical components of their composition, which among other matters, makes them condemn the chorus's role in Seneca because it does not share the form and the function of the choruses in the traditional Greek drama.

In the second category of Seneca's interpreters, a proportion of scholars attributes a philosophical function to Seneca's plays, but they did not necessarily agree that there is a Stoic element in them and that Seneca's intention when writing the plays did serve his philosophical aspirations but they do not maintain that the plays reflected Stoic philosophy as they raised certain limitations and objections against a pro-Stoic approach. Some of the scholars in this category are Dingel,[14] Segal,[15] Schiesaro,[16] and Staley.[17] Their interpretation is largely an answer to the proponents of the anti-philosophy and anti-Stoic reading of the plays. They attribute the absence of a discussion of poetics in Seneca's prose to a historical accident, and they argue in favour of a possible philosophical theorisation of Seneca's aesthetics.[18] Furthermore, Staley argues that Seneca's apparent hostility to poetry is confined to specific genres and forms but not tragic drama.[19] A view[20] which supports the plays' philosophical integrity is that traditionally, Stoic philosophers employed tragedy to enhance the teachings of their moral psychology, for which they used tragic examples to dramatise passions and incite problematisation about excessive emotional reactions. Most important to the current thesis is Martha Nussbaum's and Harry Staley's position[21] that the tragedies have been improperly framed as un-Stoic because of the assumption that they need to convey positive Stoic content and use examples of virtuous figures so that they adhere to Stoicism. However, this view does not take into consideration the feasible use of the plays as negative *exempla* of a life full of vice and passions or the depiction of tragic characters as case studies of people

[9] Fitch 1981, pp. 289–307.
[10] Tarrant 1995.
[11] Hine 2000, p. 23.
[12] Hine 2000, p. 5.
[13] Nussbaum 1994, p. 449; Boyle 1997, p. 33; Dingel 1974; Fitch 1987, p. 43.
[14] Dingel 1974.
[15] Segal 2008.
[16] Schiesaro 2003.
[17] Staley 2010.
[18] Staley 2010, p. 5; Fitch 1987, p. 47.
[19] Staley 2010, pp. 7, 48.
[20] Nussbaum 1993, p. 99.
[21] Nussbaum 1993, p. 48; Staley 2010, p. 9.

who went mad because of their bad reasoning and moral degradation. However, Nussbaum believes that although Seneca had the intention to teach Stoicism through his plays, the latter failed to serve his purpose.[22]

Among the scholars who accept a philosophical aspect in Seneca's plays are those who filter Seneca's plays through an Aristotelian or Platonic point of view.[23] They believe that even if many aspects of Seneca's poetry are based on Stoicism, these do not suffice to render Seneca's poetry Stoic. Staley promotes a theory of Stoic poetics, which, however, is heavily informed by Aristotle's poetics. The plays are created as Stoic epistemic exercises, and they are not able to teach Stoic doctrines through allegory. Therefore, Stoicism has only an instrumental role in the plays, which contribute to the Aristotelian concept of *καθάρσις*.[24]

Regarding the Platonic approach, there is a wide spectrum of supporters. Littlewood suggests that the tragedies are informed by Stoicism since they remind the audience of cosmic order and laws,[25] but he maintains that there are still doubts about a fully Stoic interpretation due to the chaos's predominance in the plays and the lack of a divine 'controlling order'.[26] Thus he turns to Platonism, as does Alessandro Schiesaro,[27] who claims that there is no rational component or mental processes on behalf of the tragic characters; passion prevails, leaving no room for reason, and everything stems from a 'passionate realm'.[28] According to Schiesaro, Seneca's poetics bristles with madness, which he associates with the mental state of the 'inspired poet' in Plato's *Phaedrus* (Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a), and could never stem from a 'sane mind'.[29] Dingel also comments on the same platonic passage and compares Seneca with Socrates in *Phaedrus* 248d-e.[30]

A group of scholars follow a psychoanalytical approach to Seneca's plays, although this could be highly restrictive as the concept of psychoanalysis was developed much later in time, and therefore, it would entail a much different ethical and research framework from Seneca's time. In addition, the scholars would have to manage the confusion of the terms and their differences in meaning since there would be at least two separate sets of systems, the philosophical–Stoic system and the psychoanalytical one. Despite the limitations, Segal uses Lacanian terminology in his approach,[31] whereas Hadot[32] relates Seneca to psychotherapeutic tradition and course in time. Furthermore, both Staley and Schiesaro follow a Freudian approach to repressed emotions and impulses.[33] However, their views of the plays differ in that Schiesaro[34] parallels them with a mad poet's dreams, whereas Staley approaches them as analyst's interpretations.[35]

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[22] Nussbaum 1994, p. 449.
[23] Staley 2010; Littlewood 2004; Schiesaro 1997, 2003; Dingel 1974.
[24] Staley 2010, pp. 5, 8, 51, 66-95 (Chapter 4), 136.
[25] Littlewood 2004, p. 17.
[26] Littlewood 2004, pp. 15-16.
[27] See Staley 2010, pp. 6, 41-42 for an overview of Seneca as a Platonic poet.
[28] Schiesaro 1997, p. 98.
[29] Schiesaro 2003, p. 22. See also Dingel 1974, p. 26 for a commentary on the same passage
[30] Dingel 1974, p. 26.
[31] Segal 1986.
[32] Hadot 1969.
[33] Schiesaro 2003, pp. 1-7.
[34] Schiesaro 2003, esp. pp. 1-7.
[35] Staley 2010, p. 8.

Furthermore, many scholars place Seneca within a Roman literary tradition arguing that he was influenced mostly by the Augustan poets, mainly Virgil, Horace, and Ovid.[36] Christopher V. Trinacty followed a similar analysis, employing the notions of the self and self-perception to interrelate Seneca's drama with *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*,[37] placing Seneca within a Roman literary tradition.[38] However, the premise that Seneca belongs within a literary (Augustan) tradition does not suffice to foreclose a Stoic interpretation. Unfortunately, intertextuality in Senecan drama is not included in the scope of the current thesis, although it reasonably draws a remarkable proportion of the scholars' attention.[39]

Finally, the last category of scholars is the supporters of a Stoic reading of the plays, whose view has gained increasing ground in the debate over the past decades. Marti,[40] Pratt,[41] Egermann,[42] Dingel,[43] Rosenmeyer[44] are only some scholars who attempted to find connecting links between Seneca's Stoicism and drama. Marti's claim that the plays have been ordered in a sequence which reveals a pedagogical meaning lacks historical evidence and cannot be further supported, whereas Pratt's view depends on the position that Seneca was Posidonius's supporter and did not follow the mainstream Stoic view on passions, which was mainly Chrysippean. However, Pratt's position would not leave room for the rational mental processes evident in Seneca's tragic characters. Also, Rosenmeyer lays out the philosophical background of the plays which is permeated by Stoic physics, according to which the universe in the tragedies allows for some human volition unless it is diseased and malfunctions.[45] Despite his immense influence on the Pro-Stoic interpretations of the plays, Rosenmeyer's work has not adequately included the ethical dimension of the matter.[46]

Over the past years, the interest in Senecan studies has reemerged, and a renewed tendency to attribute a didactic and pedagogical aspect to Seneca's tragedies has developed.[47] Not only do scholars argue for a Stoic reading of the plays, but they also maintain that Seneca is teaching and inciting his audience away from the passions since, according to the Stoic account of passions, impulses and excessive emotional reactions should be extirpated. Martha Nussbaum and Emma Buckley have attempted to interrelate Medea's anger with the impulse of anger as depicted in Seneca's *De Ira*.[48] Stefano Maso argues that Seneca's tragedies were written within a pedagogical frame aiming at Nero's education. The tragic protagonists have an anti-heroic role and function as *exempla* of the *proficiens* (the 'progressor', who is in the middle of moral progress and improvement)

[36] See more in Littlewood 2004, pp. 259-301; Schiesaro 2003, pp. 26-31, 221-228; Hinds 1998, Putnam 1995, pp. 246-285; Tarrant 1978, p. 214; Spika 1890; Ter Haar Romeny 1887.
[37] Henceforth, *Epistles.*
[38] Trinacty 2014, pp. 8-16, p. 234.
[39] Michalopoulos, Garani, Papaioannou 2020.
[40] Marti 1945.
[41] Pratt 1948, 1973.
[42] Egermann 1940.
[43] Dingel 1974.
[44] Rosenmeyer 1989.
[45] Rosenmeyer 1989, pp. 77, 90.
[46] Stevens 1992, p. 140; Nussbaum 1994, p. 449.
[47] Yun Lee Too 1994, pp. 211-224; Edwards 1997, pp. 23-38; Schafer 2011, pp. 32-52. The focus is on Seneca, *Epistles* 6.5; 8.5; 89; 94.
[48] Nussbaum 1994, pp. 439-483; Buckley 2013, pp. 51-52.

who, due to his bad reason and his passions, lost his sanity and his chance of moral conduct.[49] Although I do agree with Maso's conclusion and methodology, I cannot overlook his Posidonian interpretation of a twofold division of the Stoic soul into two parts, a rational and an irrational, which renders the Stoic account of soul and passions to be a subcategory or philosophical product of the Platonic and Aristotelian accounts. However, Maso's inference does not align with Seneca's account of passions in his *De Ira* 2.2.1-2.4.2, according to which three motions are necessary for the formation of passions, of which the more crucial requires the bad function of the rational faculty and a background of evaluating mechanisms and beliefs which define the agent's judgments and therefore his passions.

Martha Nussbaum is a supporter of the didactic function of Seneca's drama, which belongs within a Stoic tradition which employs poetry as educational means and faces the dangers entailed with the aid of censorship, writing new poetry, allegorical interpretation, and critical spectatorship.[50] With regard to Seneca's plays, she maintains that the philosopher attempts critical, detached spectatorship on behalf of the audience, who is to comprehend the perplexity of the characters' inner conflicts and passions guided by the chorus, which functions as a model of their reaction and usually being non-sympathetic towards the protagonists.[51] However, although Nussbaum produces an impressive all-round interpretation of Seneca's plays, she denounces Seneca's philosophical tragedy as insufficient because of the poet's lack of control.[52] However, the philosopher's mastery, his poetic implementation of rationality in the plays and the use of the method of examples, will tailor the tragedies to the audience's needs and guide them to a Stoic moral meaning without the need for the poet's further explanation, even if the audience do not have philosophical knowledge, as it will be shown throughout the thesis.

Despite the objections and concerns around the philosophical and educative function of Seneca's plays, it is obvious that scholars have tended towards pro-Stoic reading more and more over the past decades. Nussbaum's research was a breakthrough for the view of Seneca's plays as educational means, and in spite of her objections about their efficacy, her work has a great impact on the current research. More scholars view Seneca's drama as educative and even psychotherapeutic. Pascale Paré-Rey achieves to bridge Seneca's philosophical prose and poetry through her work on the role of *sententiae* in Seneca's tragedies, which permits a mixed audience, meaning viewers and readers with various backgrounds, who do not need to be informed by Stoic doctrines necessarily, to attend and benefit from the play.[53] Paré-Rey's work is particularly interesting and presents many affinities with my thesis as it exemplifies the role of a Senecan and Stoic theoretical concept as this is applied to the plays. On the one hand, *sententiae* imbue the text with eloquence and beauty, and on the other hand they promote Seneca's philosophical teaching. The combination of the two allows the audience to be moved and, therefore, easily influenced by the moral message. According to Quintilian (Quantilian, *Inst*. 5.13.43), there was a great focus on declamatory art and the rhetorical exercises to *controversiae* (controversies

[49] Maso 2017, pp. 25-27.
[50] Nussbaum 1993, pp. 100, 127-145; 1991.
[51] Nussbaum 1993, pp. 148-149.
[52] Nussbaum 1993, p. 148-149.
[53] Paré-Rey 2012, pp. 208–242. For a review, see Wilson 2016, pp. 130-132.

and debates on moral and legal issues) and *suasoriae* (speeches of historical figures with themselves about the management of a crisis)[54] as part of a young Roman's education in the 1st century CE and Imperial era.[55] The emphasis on rhetorical studies enhances the possibility of the educative role of *sententiae* within Seneca's poetic work. Ana Azevedo Bezerra Felicio gives a brilliant argument for the need for *sententiae* and their educative role in Seneca's *Medea* since she shows how a whole stichomythic exchange between Medea and the Nurse (*Medea* 159-163) would not exist if *sententiae* were not included.[56] She astutely argues that *sententiae*, being another rhetorical device, is a trait which connects Seneca's prose and his plays, and, in addition, indicates the bond between the plays and the audience of 1st century CE, who were accustomed to such devices and moral debates performed during a play.[57] As shown in Chapter 2, the limited evidence does not allow scholars to form an accurate decision on whether Seneca's plays were performed or recited, but for the purposes of the current thesis, a pro-performance view would be more favourable. However, my argument in favour of a Stoic reading of the plays stands even if they were not performed, since the plays create a mental picture in the audience's mind, as will be explained in Chapter 3.

Proceeding to the content of the current thesis, my research's scope lies within the pro-Stoic tradition as it has developed over the past decades. My thesis explores the Stoic passion in poetry and how the latter affects the soul. Seneca's ample body of work offers a critical opportunity for the analysis of this issue and a way into the broader issue of the role of poetry in Stoic thought. Stoic philosophers often drew tragic or epic examples from poetry in order to enhance the theoretical claims they espoused. I am of the opinion that Seneca's tragedy is sufficiently informed by Stoicism as displayed in his philosophical prose, especially but not exclusively *De Ira*, *Epistles,* and *De Beneficiis.*[58] I also maintain that Seneca's drama is used as an educational and psychotherapeutic tool to guide the audience away from passions or to incite their problematisation and challenge their common understanding of their judgements, beliefs and values.

The whole thesis is divided into two parts, of which the first one pertains to the placement of Seneca within a Stoic tradition and the second is dedicated to a comparative study of Seneca's philosophical works vis-à-vis his dramaturgy. I explore the Stoic account of passions and the two main Stoic views of poetry, Chrysippean and Posidonian, which will lay the background for my philosophical analysis of the plays and the

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[54] It would be wise to keep in mind, however, that *suasoriae* were often addressed to historical figures.

[55] Costa 1989, pp. 3-4. See also Mal-Maeder 2007, p. 117, who argues that although characters of the same mould are presented both in novels and in declamation, the genre of novel allows for more twists in the plot and hence gives a greater scope for psychological alavalysis and development of the characters ("Nous aurons à voir également dans la suite de ce chapitre que si les personnages des romans sortent souvent du même moule que les personnages des déclamations, le genre du roman, qui admet davantage de péripéties, leur offre des possibilités de développements psychologiques beaucoup plus importantes.")

[56] Felicio 2023, pp. 327-333.

[57] Felicio 2023, p. 330. On the relationship between the contemporary audience, the plays' rhetorical structures, and the tragic *sententiae*, see Boyle 1997, pp. 15-31. See more on *sententiae* and Seneca in Dinter, p. 333.

[58] All translations from Seneca's *De Ira, Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium, De Beneficiis, De Providentia, Naturales Questiones, De Constantia, De Clementia, De Consolatione ad Marciam* and rest of Seneca's philosophical prose are drawn from Basore 1917; 1928; 1932; Gummere 1917-1925 (Loeb editions), unless otherwise stated. All translations of Seneca's tragedies are drawn from Fitch 2018; 2002 (Loeb editions) unless otherwise stated.

psychological portraiture of the tragic characters. The second part of my thesis investigates the plays themselves in conjunction with Stoic concepts drawn from Seneca's philosophical prose. My main aim is to showcase the educative function of the plays, which serve as negative *exempla* of the Stoic *furor* and insanity. The protagonists are antiheroes, and they illustrate the destructive power of passions. Therefore, the last four chapters conceptualise Seneca's tragic *exempla*, providing them with philosophical integrity. Briefly, I am tackling issues such as the problem of evil in Seneca's tragic world, the educative role of the chorus and minor characters who have been vastly neglected in the scholarly literature, the physical manifestation of Stoic passion, and the emotional causality of *furor*, based on erroneous values about *Fortuna* and *indifferentia*, which are external things of no intrinsic importance.

Regarding the significance of my research, not only will it enlighten and give a different or enhanced perspective on the aforementioned topics, but it will also become an engine for further research and analysis on Senecan studies since I dive into academic issues which are often overlooked and hastily dismissed, such as the role of the Senecan chorus. I also approach the various scholarly debates from a holistic point of view, encompassing both the philosophical and the poetic works of Seneca. However, current literature, although crucial, mainly emphasises various aspects of either the tragedies or the prose separately. My thesis approaches both tragedy and prose in conjunction so that the influence of Senecan Stoicism is evident in the plays. The impact of his philosophy is revealed by the psychological make-up of the tragic characters, who are case studies to showcase their role as tragic *exempla*. Furthermore, the current thesis pertains to a cross-curricular project since ancient philosophy (especially moral psychology), literature and Seneca's poetics are studied jointly, and one field permeates the other. Most importantly, the success of my endeavour will be one more milestone in the substantiation of the compatibility between Seneca's philosophy and drama by contributing to a better understanding of a series of minor subjects during this fascinating philosophical investigation.

First chapter delves into Stoic theories on passions[59] and views of poetry. I initiate the discussion by describing the differentiations between the Stoic philosophers Chrysippus and Posidonius on the nature of the soul. The former follows a monistic approach to the nature of the soul, whereas the latter is likely to have argued in favour of a dualistic view. Their divergent perspectives on the soul produced different views of poetry and, therefore, different interpretations of the emotional reactions of Euripides' *Medea*, whom they employed as a case study for philosophical purposes. Not only does the current analysis provide vital insights into Stoic moral psychology and the seemingly contradictory position of poetry in Stoicism, but it also lays the basic framework for understanding the function of Stoic passion in Seneca's drama.[60]

[59] For insights into Stoic perspectives on emotion theory, consider consulting Graver 2007 (esp. pp. 15-34 and 61-83); Algra, 1999), pp. 699-705; Brennan 2003, pp. 260-274; Becker 2004, pp. 254-258 (Becker compares Stoic to modern ideas of emotion); Kaster & Nussbaum 2010, pp. 3-13; Cooper & Procopé 1995, pp.13-14. For a focused study on anger within Stoicism, see Harris 2001, pp. 88-128.

[60] For further reading on Seneca's approach to emotion, refer to works by Konstan 2015; Sorabji 1998; 2007. Discussions on Seneca's potential influences, including Posidonius and possibly Panaetius, can be found in Pratt 1983, pp. 64-65; Harris 2001, pp. 109.

An analysis of the Senecan tragic characters' emotions under a Stoic light will be the main goal of my thesis and the medium to show that Senecan tragedy approached the Stoic didactic aims to an extent far greater than the previous attempts of his predecessors since it functions as a complimentary method for the therapy of passions. In addition, I will use the philosophical work of Seneca *De Ira* as a point of reference, which will serve to clarify the cognitive procedure that causes the tragic characters' affective reactions. Before proceeding with the central goal of the project though, it is crucial to first explain the Stoic fondness, use, citation and even practice of poetry- the feeder of emotions- in favour of their philosophical system. Thus, an explanatory analysis of the Stoic moral psychology and the examination of certain Stoic views on poetry serve as an important inaugural and solid background for the emotional analysis of the tragic characters at a later stage.

More specifically, the differentiations between the Chrysippean and Posidonian accounts of the soul and poetry will allow us to clarify Seneca's place among the two. Chrysippus's monistic view of the soul assesses the source of vice and passions to be the rational faculty of the soul, whereas Posidonius, being influenced by Platonism, believes that passions derive from a completely irrational part of the soul (Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 5-7).[61] In regard to poetry, their views are highly informed by these differences since, although both agree that poetry has an educative nature, they disagree on the manner in which poetry influences its audience and serves against the formation of passions. Chrysippus believes that the audience will critically view the content of the tragic plot and analyse the bad reasoning of the characters, whereas Posidonius believes that since passions stem from an irrational part, they cannot be removed by rational means. Martha Nussbaum[62] argues that the Chrysippean or 'cognitive' view as she calls it, although preferable to the Posidonian ('non-cognitive view), does not fully avoid the dangers of misleading the youth since the audience does not always attend the play through the critical eyes of a Stoic. Christopher Gill supports the Chrysippean view more explicitly, although he argues that Medea was not the ideal example for Chrysippus to use in order to explain his psychology, since Medea was 'a rather exceptional' individual.[63] In contrast to the above claims, Margaret Graver argues that in reality Posidonius' objections lead not to an anti-Chrysippean view but to a more coherent and complete psychological theory, which constitutes a continuation of the cognitive approach. I will argue that Chrysippus offers a coherent suggestion on how the passions of tragic characters function that is more efficient than the Posidonian view, which treats passions as irrational movements. Furthermore, I will also argue that Medea was not a threat to the Chrysippean account because she was aware of the irrationality in her actions despite her decision to indulge in her passion. Furthermore, I challenge Graver's view that the Posidonian view is a modified version of Chrysippus's theory due to their clear divergence in their accounts of passion, which cannot be overlooked.

Furthermore, the Chrysippean origins of Seneca's account of passions, in contrast to Posidonius's, allow for a better understanding of his dramatic compositions and their harmonisation with Seneca's theory of

[61] All translations of Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis (*Hhenceforth *PHP*) are drawn from De Lacy 1981 unless otherwise stated.
[62] Nussbaum 1994, 1993.
[63] Gill 1983, p. 144.

passions. The main obstacle to the compatibility between prose and poetry is their intense character and the pre-eminence of strong emotional reactions, which come in contradiction to the Stoic ethics since it condemns the experience of passions. However, both Chrysippus and Seneca mention that passions are often preceded by the *προπάθειαι*, the so-called first movements, or pre- passions or progressor emotions. The concept of *προπάθειαι* is the first motus in Seneca's three stages of passions (*De Ira* 2.2.1-2.4.2), and it is a preliminary sensation or warning of the passion. The concept of pre-passions enhances the view of poetry as a secondary therapeutic tool since it explicates the positive impact of the plays on the audience. The viewers or readers have the opportunity to observe their pre-passions elicited by the monstrous depictions in the plays and, through their examination, to analyse the tragic characters' actions critically from a detached point of view. Furthermore, the potential educative usage of the pre-passions aligns with the ethical role of poetry within the Stoic tradition. Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Epictetus, and Seneca are characteristic examples of Stoic philosophers who were engaged with poetry.

Furthermore, another issue explored in the thesis will be the Stoic *οἰκείωσις* (appropriation) and its relation to the educative function of the tragedies. I will make the case that appropriation explains Seneca's role as teacher; it also explains part of the goal of the audience, i.e. to develop better judgements.

I aim to show that the collaboration of three factors which are 1) Seneca's allocation within a Stoic philosophical tradition, 2) Seneca's monistic account of passions and soul, and especially his three-fold process of passions, exemplified by the frequent Stoic usage of poetic *exempla* (examples) for educative and ethical purposes, and 3) Seneca's own view of poetry prepare the ground for the defence of Seneca's 'philosophical tragedy'.

The second chapter of my thesis focuses on two integral topics which, although previously mentioned, have not been fully explored yet. These are the compatibility of Seneca's drama with his Stoic beliefs and the question of the plays' performance or recitation/reading. Although the latter issue remains unresolved until nowadays, I conducted my research under the more reasonable impression that the tragedies were performable.[64] The discussion will set the stage for a deeper look into the narrative techniques Seneca uses in his plays to attract and stir the audience. These techniques engage the audience and consist of the employment of the *sententiae*, exhortations and admonitions in line with Stoicism, the dramatization of passions, the visual illustration of passions and madness, and the chorus's and minor characters' role in the audience's moral guidance. I aim to demonstrate their exemplification through the illustration of Seneca's tragic *exempla* in the next chapters. I contend that Seneca's ethical teachings align with his dramaturgy, the depiction of intense emotions and the resultant emotional responses of the audience, which is offered a vicarious experience of the harmful effect of unrestrained passions, allowing them to witness the formation and the cause of the protagonists' irrational behaviour. Seneca has advanced Chrysippus's view of the audience and finds a way to actualise the audience's 'compassionate but also detached,' doctor-like, critical approach to the play. The simultaneous use of rhetorical

[64] Boyle 1997, p. 11. The view of a performed tragedy also serves the purposes of my third chapter, where the visual element and its educative role in Stoic ethics are stressed and justified by Stoic physics.

devices such as *sententiae* and admonitions, and the indirect experience of the passions' intensity through the dramatic unfolding of the plot, both emotionally stir and lure the audience's attention and create the necessary perspective, time and distance for them to evaluate, reflect and reject the underlying judgments (*iudicia*) which give rise to the passions. The two-fold stimulation of the audience prompts their engagement with Stoic ethics at a cognitive and an emotional level since they cultivate an alignment of one's judgments with nature, self-improvement, and the diligent effort to resist the development of soul-corrupting passions. Last but not least, Seneca secures the audience's guidance towards Stoic virtues by repurposing the literary role of the chorus and minor characters as a philosophical mechanism to not only immerse the audience in the tragic plot but also to steer them towards appropriate responses to their aesthetical experience. In addition, the didactic role of the chorus also serves to resolve its seemingly paradoxical presence in the plays and comes in contradiction to its dismissal as badly-written due to the unfair comparison to the chorus in traditional Greek tragedy. Furthermore, the interference of the chorus's usage of *sententiae* renders the audience able to draw a Stoic conclusion without having heard of its philosophical principles before. Therefore, a pro-Stoic reading of the plays, which is addressed to a wide non-philosophically-educated audience, is the most feasible hypothesis.

Third chapter focuses on the visual manifestation of emotions and madness evident on the body and face. The physicality of emotions ties back to Stoic physics, which views passions as corporeal events. Again, I will employ tragic *exempla* as case studies to demonstrate the connection between physicality and passions. Before I delve into the tragic characters and their physiognomic manifestation of their mental state, it is important to touch upon the practice of physiognomy in ancient times briefly, highlighting two approaches, which will be beneficial for the comprehension of the current chapter: the comparison of human behaviours to animal characteristics and postures, and how intense emotions can alter and distort the face and body. Furthermore, I will examine the significant role of physiognomy within Stoic philosophy, challenging the rather absolute view that Stoics dismissed physiognomics altogether.[65] On the contrary, I will argue in favour of the theory that intertwines physiognomy with Stoicism[66] through an analysis of Stoic texts and the role of Stoic physics in justifying physiognomy (not, however, as a category internal to Stoicism). Emotions are considered corporeal, as are the entire cosmos and the soul, which was believed to be located in the heart region. Emotions are described as tensional movements of the πνεῦμα, which affect the body's denser and heavier parts, making anger visible on one's face due to these internal movements. The physical manifestation of emotions was a common theme in various works, suggesting a significant link between physiognomy and Stoicism, especially during the Roman Imperial era. Finally, I will discuss how revealing Seneca's tragic characters' mental state to the spectators creates a mental image that helps in recognising the true essence and risks of passions. This understanding serves a moral and educational purpose in the plays, as illustrated through examples showing how physiognomic expressions and impersonations of madness and *furor* influence the audience, encouraging them to reflect on the nature of passions.

[65] Boys-Stones 2009.
[66] Bexley 2022; Evans 1950.

My fourth chapter takes a deeper look into the establishment of *furor* and madness in the individual's soul. *Furor,* viewed as an internal process, is the complete defeat of reason in Stoicism and particularly in Seneca. My main interest lies in the emotional causality of *feritas* (brutishness), which comes along with *furor*, and the implications of an individual's moral accountability. The apprehension of the way that vices and passions overpower reason is pivotal as it elucidates the inner process which leads from passions, such as anger (*ira*), to *furor* and *feritas*. This internal progression mirrors Seneca's assertion that certain incurable traits are irreversibly acquired through frequent exposure to passions. It is beneficial to enhance the philosophical cohesion of the concept of *furor,* by differentiating between the terms *furor, insania, feritas,* and *crudelitas* in spite of the emergent difficulties and potential confusion caused by their interchangeable usage. Examining these terms aims to illustrate the emotional causality of madness as an internal process, which renders the agent personally responsible for their mental state and their actions. Subsequently, I will conduct an analysis of Seneca's dramatic characters by exemplifying the internal process of *furor*'s development to illustrate the causal relation between their ingrained mental traits and their *furor* or hallucinatory insanity, an association which establishes their moral accountability for their *scelera* (crimes). The correlation between the philosophical analysis of emotional causality and its exploration through the tragic *exempla*, is one more unifying thread between Seneca's philosophy and poetry. In addition, the current discussion touches upon an ambiguous matter regarding the nature of the self, which has dichotomised the scholars into two camps: the ones who believe that excessive exposure to passions leads to a recreation of the self and those who maintain a dissolution of the self. My analysis of Seneca's *exempla,* in conjunction with his prose, challenges the first point of view since it posits that recurrent emotional experiences can develop enduring character traits and induce alterations in the mind, which are not easily reversed. These alterations potentially give rise to a distorted personality if reason fails to intervene promptly, leading to the self's disintegration and dismantlement.

The chapter aligns with the broader objective of my thesis, which is to explicate Seneca's endeavours to caution his audience against succumbing to anger through his tragic *exempla*. The persistent theme of madness stemming from the experience of intense emotions in Roman tragedy and Seneca's strategic use of this theme to dissuade his audience from yielding to their passions underscores the analysis. Therefore, the exploration of the Stoic emotional origins of *furor* and madness underpins the pre-emptive nature and educative function of the Senecan tragedy. This entails a psychological exposition and examination of various tragic characters in relation to Seneca's philosophical prose to explicate the cognitive processes that engender emotional responses and culminate in the defeat of reason.

In the fifth chapter, I primarily aim to uncover one last unifying thread between Stoic conceptions of action and the dramatic compositions of Seneca, which highlights the personal accountability of the agent's behaviour and mental state. Throughout Seneca's tragedies, the characters blame *Fortuna* for the adversities she brings upon humans suddenly and unexpectedly. I aim to show that this behaviour is reprimanded by the Stoics and is directly related to their action theory by underscoring the relevance between humans' dependence on and blaming of *Fortuna* as the source of their misery. I show that, in line with the Stoic model of human action, irrational actions, driven by passions, and the true reason for one's suffering stem from flawed judgments

(*iudicia*) arising from undue importance placed on things that lack inherent value- referred to by the Stoics as *ἀδιάφορα* or *indifferentia*. These are beyond human control since they are under *Fortuna*'s jurisdiction. In other words, the reason for human suffering is their own misconceptions of *indifferentia*. *Fortuna*, the personification or concept of chance, is characterised by her unpredictable and capricious nature. To achieve a life of virtue and emotional serenity, devoid of passion, reliance on *Fortuna* must be eschewed. Throughout both his prose and dramaturgy, Seneca emphasises the fickle nature of *Fortuna*, upon which many base their happiness, attempting to exert control over *indifferentia* in vain. The thread that connects Seneca's philosophical discourse with his dramatic works is the emphasis on *Fortuna*'s erratic behaviour, and the assent (*adsensus mentis*) to the misguided judgments and imprudent valuation of *indifferentia* by tragic characters, thereby elucidating their egregious deeds through the lens of Stoic action theory. To illustrate the linkage between Seneca's tragedies and Stoic action theory, and argue about their compatibility, my analysis explores concepts of passion, such as *ira, timor*, and *amor*, in relation to *indifferentia* and their association with *Fortuna,* as depicted in Seneca's philosophical treatises – mainly *Epistles*, *De Ira*, and *De Beneficiis*- and juxtaposed with tragic instances in the plays. Specifically, I present examples of tragic characters who fall prey to *Fortuna*, to whom they have, nonetheless, willingly surrendered control over their lives and mental peace, opting instead to resist their immutable destiny. The educative function of the plays is enhanced even more by the chorus's or other characters' references to *Fortuna* and the misfortunes she brings. Furthermore, the illustration of the role of divine reason and nature, which determine the *indifferentia* and work in ways non-comprehensible to humans, and Stoic exhortations or admonitions towards the avoidance of valuing *indifferentia* and towards the surrender to one's fate also accentuate the educative significance of Seneca's tragedies. Therefore, ironically, we should not resist *Fortuna* since she is just another aspect of *Fatum* and *Providentia*. However, humans often tended to blame a divine entity for what they thought of as misfortunes instead of introspecting and realising their own responsibility. Therefore, Seneca stresses the human responsibility for misfortunes stemming from improperly valuing *indifferentia* as important or harmful and blaming the gods (*Fortuna*) when factors which are controlled only by *Fatum* or *Fortuna* or *Providentia* seemingly worsen their lives. The emphasis on personal moral accountability of one's bad values and judgments is one more connective link between Seneca's philosophical compositions and dramaturgy since it underscores the latter's ethical and educative function.

Chapter 1 – The Stoic Account of Passions and the Stoic Views on Poetry

The Stoic Passions and Action Theory

This chapter focuses on two major thinkers, Chrysippus and Posidonius, and explores how their differing views on the soul played out in their discussions of poetry and the passions,[67] with particular emphasis on their discussion of how to interpret Medea's emotional conflict depicted in Euripides' homonymous play. This analysis of the views of Seneca's philosophical predecessors will contextualise my readings of Seneca's drama;[68] this chapter also offers essential background on Stoic moral psychology and serves to introduce the broader issue of the paradoxical role of poetry in Stoic thought.

Since the argument of my thesis centres on the emotional states of the tragic characters, it will be crucial to offer an initial analysis of Stoic ideas about πάθος. The concept of πάθος, πάθημα or *passio* (also rendered as *animi motus, affectio, affectus*, *perturbatio*) is difficult to translate; the modern term 'emotion' covers some but not all aspects of the term.[69] According to Chrysippus and the majority of Stoics, πάθη are excessive impulses of the soul (ὁρμαί), which are disobedient to Reason (λόγος, Arius Didymus, 65A). Impulse is the Reason that compels us to act:

> Καὶ μὴν ἡ ὁρμή, κατά γ᾽ αὐτόν, τοῦ ἀνθρώπου λόγος ἐστὶ προστατικὸς αὐτῷ τοῦ ποιεῖν.
>
> Plutarch, *Περί Στωικῶν Ἐναντιωμάτων* 1037 F/ *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3.175.[70]

Hence, mere impulse is not something irrational or vicious. Impulses depend upon our value judgements: impulse leads us to seek after something we deem good and to avoid what we view as bad. A background belief set is necessary; a prior value that the present object is good or bad. However, every Stoic πάθος consists of thought content and is an excessive emotional response to external phenomena caused by mistaken judgments; passions are 'epistemic errors.'[71] These errors in judgment are, again, determined by our evaluation and estimation of the external impressions (φαντασίαι) we receive from the outer environment. Therefore, if we

[67] On Stoic views of Stoic emotion theory, see Graver 2007 (esp. pp. 15-34 and 61-83); Algra et al. 1999, pp. 699-705; Brennan 2003, pp. 260-274; Becker 2004, pp. 254-258 (Becker compares Stoic to modern ideas of emotion); Kaster & Nussbaum 2010, pp. 3-13; Cooper & Procopé 1995, pp.13-14. On anger especially, see Harris 2001, pp. 88-128.
[68] On Seneca and emotion, see Motto 2003; Konstan 2015; Sorabji 1998; 2007. For the idea that Seneca was influenced by Posidonius or even Panaetius, see Pratt 1983, pp. 64-65; Harris 2001, p. 109.
[69]For a more detailed analysis on the definition of the term πάθος or emotion and the issues aroused around it, see Cairns & Fulkerson 2015, pp. 1-22; T. Dixon 2003; 2012, pp. 337-93; Wierzbicka 1999; Griffiths 1997; Roberts 2003; Solomon 2003; Russell 1997; Damasio 1995; Prinz 2004.
[70] All passages or translations from *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (henceforth *SVF*) are drawn from von Arnim 1903-1924; 1964; 1978; and 2004 unless otherwise stated.
[71] Wildberger 2006, p. 78.

hold incorrect values — for example, that money, fame, and longevity are good — then these false views will lead us toward improper actions. Impulses are subdivisions of actions, since the act of judgment is something active, something one *does*. They are motions toward the predicate our mind has given its assent as true and appropriate to pursue (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.7.9 (86W), 2.7.9b (88W)).[72] The passion is a 'very violent motion that pushes us violently toward action' (*SVF* 3.390). Furthermore, passions are the objects of Stoic therapy, and ἀπάθεια is the latter's goal. Ἀπάθεια is a mental state free from passions, the state of a mind undisturbed by impulses which are characterised by unnecessary excess.

According to the fourfold classification of passions, which is preserved in Stobaeus and offers a useful general summary of mainline Stoic views (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.7.10b (90W)), the main general πάθη are desire or appetite (ἐπιθυμία), fear (φόβος), pleasure or delight (ἡδονή), and pain or distress (λύπη). The Latin equivalents are *appetitus*, *cupiditas*, *libido* for ἐπιθυμία, *metus* for φόβος, *laetitia* for ἡδονή, and *aegritudo* for λύπη.[73] Desire is the irrational ὄρεξις, the excessive impulse to achieve or obtain a good in the future (*SVF* 3.391/ LS 65B). Fear is the irrational aversion of something bad one expects oneself to undergo. According to Stobaeus, pleasure is an irrational elation which results from thinking one has obtained something good when a desire has been fulfilled or a fear avoided. Pain is an irrational sorrow which results from the agent's belief that something bad has happened to her (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.7.10b (90W)). Hence, pleasure and pain depend on the success or failure of our expectations, which are conditioned by our desires and fears. When these opinions are imperfectly rational, excessive impulses — πάθη — arise. It is clear from all this that the Stoic account of moral psychology links passions closely with time: fear and desire pertain to a potential future good or evil, and delight and pain pertain to a present or recently (fresh) occurred apparent good or evil (Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.11).[74]

More specifically, according to the mainstream Chrysippean account, a passion occurs when the individual holds wrong judgments due to her assent (συγκατάθεσις) to false impressions (φαντασίαι) from the environment.[75] For a passion to arise, however, the judgment that an external stimulus is true is not enough. A further cognitive assumption, which reflects my belief that the external stimulus is good or evil is necessary (Galen, *PHP* 4.2.1, 4.7.3).[76] Margaret Graver developed a very useful tool, the 'pathetic syllogism' as she calls it,[77] to describe the requirements for a passion to occur and indicate the internal reasoning of an individual who has an affective response to an external trigger. The syllogism also shows that the impression, although a trigger, has not caused the emotion—rather, the internal reasoning has;[78] the agent believes that objects of type T are goods, and therefore, if a good is present, it is appropriate for them to elevate their psyche due to the desire or pleasure they feel which stretches the soul towards the desired object. Object O, which belongs to type T, is now present; thus, the agent concludes that it is now appropriate for them to

[72] Graver 2007, pp. 24-27, 38.
[73] See further references for the Stoic passions in the sources Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4. 11–22, 3.84; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7. 110–14; *SVF* 3.391, 397, 401, 409, 414; Galen, *PHP* 4.2.1–4.
[74] Graver, 2007, 53.
[75] Sharples 1996, p. 22; Sorabji 2000, pp. 61-65; Graver 2007, pp. 85-102; Strange & Zupko 2004, pp. 32-51.
[76] See Graver, 2007, pp. 40-41.
[77] Graver 2007, Chapter 2.
[78] Graver 2007, p. 44.

elevate their psyche. The above case pertains to a situation where an individual feels delight and pleasure because she perceives that a good is present.

Graver's analysis of the Chrysippean view of passions highlights two key components: the occurrent and the dispositional elements, which are essential for generating a πάθος. The former involves a present object or one in prospect, which interacts with the latter, meaning the already ingrained evaluative beliefs about the goodness or badness of an object or a class of objects. When the agent is about to experience a πάθος, she recognises a connection between the two, meaning that the occurrent incident, serving as a trigger in some way, relates to the object type about which she has already formed a belief. For instance, a chocolate lover experiences an elevating affective response when offered a piece of chocolate cake because she recognises that the present object (an external impression) belongs to the type of object which has already been ascribed as good and enjoyable within her evaluative belief system. Also, regarding the notion of πάθος as νόσημα, the following example would be: a person addicted to alcohol perceives a glass of wine as very good because it would have already been established in her mind that wine - being of type X (alcohol)—is beneficial for her. Consequently, these agents find it reasonable and proper to indulge in viewing or possessing their already desired objects.

In fact, however, the objects of passions are truly valuable: rather, things like money, power, reputation, etc., are what the Stoics call ἀδιάφορα (indifferents) things which do not have intrinsic value[79] (καθ'αὑτὰ, Stobaeus, *Ecl*. 2.7.7 / 84.12 W). Ἀδιάφορα cause impressions which encompass their evaluation as good or bad momentarily (Stobaeus, *Ecl*. 2.6f-7g, 2f, 78-84 W, 97- 98W; Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.33-60; D.L.7.101-7), and accordingly, people get to 'select or deselect' them (ἐκλογή: Stobaeus, *Ecl*. 2.7.7g, 84-85W; Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.20; D.L. 7.88).[80] Therefore, these indifferents are objects which do not matter for a person's εὐδαιμονία; they do not have the power to change one's life unless the agent authorises them, and hence, their importance is not significant to the agent. Seneca, in his *Moral Epistles,* also comments on the actor who needs to perform in a 'suitable manner'in accordance with her role (*Epistles* 120). Therefore, the misconception we *fools* all make (according to the Stoics, almost everyone is a fool because they are susceptible to rational mistakes) is that due to the assent and value that we give to our judgements and evaluative beliefs, we think it proper to develop a certain πάθος at a certain time on a certain occasion about certain people, cultivating a sense of appropriateness.[81]

Michael Frede has provided an astute example to explain how one's prior background beliefs can turn a plain judgment about a present object into an emotional response.[82] Socrates's paleness, he says, might provoke different reactions since one might deem his paleness a sign of his upcoming death. This alone is not enough for the individual to become anxious or worried. She needs to evaluate Socrates's death as bad for her and to believe that being worried is appropriate in this situation. On the contrary, if Socrates's death does not have an impact on her or if she does not recognise that Socrates is pale (even if she believes that paleness indicates his

[79] Graver 2007, pp. 48, 230, ft 26.
[80] Graver 2007, pp. 48-51; Inwood 1985, pp. 194-215; Striker 1991; Irwin 1998.
[81]Graver 2007, pp. 41-46. However, indifferents are divided in two categories named preferred and dispreferred indifferents, on which see Inwood 2005, pp. 101-102.
[82] Frede 1986, pp. 104-107.

death), the external trigger will not induce any emotional reaction in her. Therefore, a complex series of cognitive judgments lies behind any emotional response. In this case, the agent needs to believe that death is bad and that if something indicative of death is present, it is appropriate for them to get worried. Hence, Socrates' paleness, which is indicative of death, is now present, and as a result, it is appropriate for the agent to worry.

Hence, πάθος is something not useful as it leads our soul towards irrational actions. Nevertheless, for most Stoics, including Chrysippus, πάθη are not strictly speaking irrational since they come from a rational part of the soul, called διάνοια or ἡγεμονικόν (*SVF* 2.459) that governs all the other psychic faculties (*SVF* 1.143; 2.836; 2.879). It changes forms and has different psychic states and dispositions, διαθέσεις (virtue, vice, passions) and can shift and swing back and forth between virtue and vice, acting irrationally because of mistaken value judgments, the excessive πάθη that influence it (*SVF* 3.459; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.*7.233).[83] Πάθη represent a distorted reason (λόγος), are incompatible with the right reason, or in other words, with the correct manifestation of reason, and they, therefore, do not motivate the individual to act in a way which will help them reach εὐδαιμονία.[84] Hence, reason and passion cannot occur simultaneously; either reason prevails and stops the passion before it develops, or it becomes stronger as the passion fades away and its intensity wanes. [85]

The Chrysippean viewpoint, then, supported a monistic account of the soul, with special emphasis on a single mind which might either operate according to the right reason (ὀρθός λόγος) or generate passions. In either case, a rational cognitive procedure takes place. Hence, πάθη are products of impaired reason, and they are caused by judgments and belief systems triggered by external impressions. Chrysippus sought to develop a comprehensive account of moral psychology that was compatible with his ethical system.[86] This account offers a clear and consistent, if radical, account of πάθη, which are often depicted in Greek literature such as anger, fear, sorrow, delight and, certainly, the ones that drive the agent to demonstrate heinous behaviours and commit to actions which otherwise their rational faculty would not have allowed under other circumstances, meaning not under the influence of the excessive (the exceeding, πλεονάζον) emotion.

All the more, Seneca, in his attempt to incite his readers to avoid the *adfectus* of anger in his *De Ira* 1.8.1-3, explains the transformation of the mind into vice when under the influence of a πάθος, and, therefore, he adheres to the mainstream Chrysippean model of action and monistic view of the passions as he does not separate the soul in irrational and rational parts:

> *Neque enim sepositus est animus et extrinsecus speculatur adfectus, ut illos non patiatur ultra quam oportet procedere, sed in adfectum ipse mutatur ideoque non potest utilem illam vim et salutarem*

[83] Peters 1967, p. 78.
[84] To reach εὐδαιμονία, virtue and wisdom suffice; DL 7.127 = LS 61I; Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.82 = LS 63M. Πάθη hinder the psychic disposition of virtue in the soul since they lead to irrational actions and vice whereas virtue consists on making the right decisions trying to select or reject things in accordance with nature (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.7.6a; Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.22 = LS 59D, 64F; Sharples 1996, pp. 102-103).
[85] On the reason's power over passions, see Konstan 2017, pp. 232-233. There are emotions, however, that can control other emotions, such as fear, grief and anger (Seneca, *De Ira* 1.8.7; 1.10.1; 3.39.4).
[86] Graver 2007, p. 80.

proditam iam infirmatamque revocare. Non enim, ut dixi, separatas ista sedes suas diductasque habent, sed affectus et ratio in melius peiusque mutatio animi est.

Seneca, *De Ira* 1.8.2-3.

Posidonius – Psychological dualism

According to Brad Inwood, despite Posidonius' reputation as an important Stoic philosopher, he nevertheless seems to have posited a more Platonic model of the soul evident in Hermias's texts (Hermias of Alexandria, *Notes on Plato's Phaedrus* 245c),[87] who shows Posidonius's cosmological interest in the soul.[88] Several sources discuss his distinct view of the soul, but our most explicit evidence comes from Galen (Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* 5-7), who aims to highlight the differences between Chrysippus, Zeno, and Posidonius regarding the nature of the soul.[89] Gill argues that Galen is not entirely reliable source[90] and that Chrysippus and Posidonius' accounts have both an inner conflict between passion and reason in common.[91] Additionally, Graver tries to reconcile the two accounts.[92] However, De Lacy argues that Posidonius parted from Chrysippus, espousing Plato and Aristotle to a greater extent.[93] Sorabji also thought that Crysippean account was of greater value in its cognitive content than Posidonius'.[94] In contrast, Wringe believes that Sorabji underestimated the Posidonian contribution, and offers a non-conceptual analysis of Posidonius' account of passions, perception and representation.[95] Here, I contend that some aspects of the Posidonian account cannot be dismissed or merely regarded as an advanced version of the Chrysippean account, even if Galen is not a reliable source. This debate is important for the current thesis as it bolsters Seneca's Chrysippean influences against Posidonian interpretations of his texts.[96] Seneca followed a monistic approach of the soul: *Non enim, ut dixi, separatas ista sedes suas diductasque habent, sed affectus et ratio in melius peiusque mutatio animi est.* ('For, as I said before, these two do not dwell separate and distinct, but passion and reason are only the transformation of the mind toward the better or the worse.' *De Ira* 1.8.3).

More specifically, although Zeno and Chrysippus agree on both that the mind is a single substance located in the heart, from which the passions originate, and on that there is a cognitive element in the passions

[87] Inwood 2022, p. 127.
[88] Ju 2009.
[89] For the reliability of Galen as a source of Stoicism, see Gill 1998, pp. 113–146; Cooper 1984, pp. 3–21. See also Gill, 2007, pp. 88–120.
[90] Gill 1998, p. 113; Cooper 1984.
[91] Gill 1998, p. 113.
[92] Graver 2007, pp. 75-81.
[93] De Lacy 1981, p. 339.
[94] For Chrysippus and Posidonius' views and cognitivism, see Sorabji 1998, pp. 149–165; Sorabji 2000; Wringe 2011, pp. 5–22.
[95] Wringe 2011, pp. 192, 204, 207-211.
[96] For a philosophical analysis on Seneca's *Epistles* 90, see Zago 2012. Zago argues that Seneca's ideas are not Posidonian, although Stoic, and that they originate from Cicero. See also Deligiannis 2012.

(despite their differences on the judgments as passions or causes of the passions). Posidonius seems to adhere to a different view:[97]

> Χρύσιππος μὲν οὖν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ παθῶν ἀποδεικνύναι πειρᾶται, κρίσεις τινὰς εἶναι τοῦ λογιστικοῦ τὰ πάθη, Ζήνων δ' οὐ τὰς κρίσεις αὐτὰς, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἐπιγιγνομένας αὐταῖς συστολὰς καὶ λύσεις, ἐπάρσεις τε καὶ τὰς πτώσεις τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι τὰ πάθη. ὁ Ποσειδώνιος δ' ἀμφοτέροις διενεχθεὶς ἐπαινεῖ τε ἅμα καὶ προσίεται τὸ Πλάτωνος δόγμα, καὶ ἀντιλέγει τοῖς περὶ τὸν Χρύσιππον, οὔτε κρίσεις εἶναι τὰ πάθη δεικνύων, οὔτε ἐπιγιγνόμενα κρίσεσι, ἀλλὰ κινήσεις τινὰς ἑτέρων δυνάμεων ἀλόγων, ἃς ὁ Πλάτων ὠνόμασεν ἐπιθυμητικήν τε καὶ θυμοειδῆ.
>
> Galen, *PHP* 5.1.4-5.

In contrast to the cognitive account of emotion, there is the Posidonian theory, which posits that emotions are irrational and unthinking forces prevailing in the soul. Emotions seem to be fierce urgencies that take over. They do not relate to conscious thoughts or appraisals. They can be seen as violent waves that 'attack' and hit the self. The above view stems from the premise that emotions originate from an irrational part of the soul. Indeed, for Posidonius, according to Galen, πάθη are παθητικαί κινήσεις (*PHP* v.5, 322 D/ *PHP* 4.5.24-46),[98] movements that do not pertain to reason or judgement. Πάθη derive from an irrational (ἄλογον) part of the soul which has nothing to do with reason (EK 31 = *PHP* v.5, 324 D.):

> καὶ γὰρ καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ Ποσειδώνιος μέμφεται καὶ δεικνύναι πειρᾶται πασῶν τῶν ψευδῶν ὑπολήψεων τὰς αἰτίας ἐν μὲν τῷ θεωρητικῷ διὰ τῆς παθητικῆς ὁλκῆς, προηγεῖσθαι δ' αὐτῆς τὰς ψευδεῖς δόξας, ἀσθενήσαντος περὶ τὴν κρίσιν τοῦ λογιστικοῦ· γεννᾶσθαι γὰρ τῷ ζώῳ τὴν ὁρμὴν ἐνίοτε μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ λογιστικοῦ κρίσει, πολλάκις δ' ἐπὶ τῇ κινήσει τοῦ παθητικοῦ.
>
> Galen, *PHP* 5.5.21.

Posidonius does refer to rational judgments as the cause of impulses, but this is only occasional when the rational faculty is weak. Therefore, impulse is a product of a passionate element in the soul and is created ἐπὶ τῇ κινήσει τοῦ παθητικοῦ, as a consequence of the irrational aspect of the soul, which is the source of passions. In the immediately next passage, Posidonius is said to talk about physiognomy, associating broader chested and hotter animals and humans alike with more spirited and passionate moods and natures (θυμικώτερα φύσει), whereas

[97] The translation can be drawn from De Lacy & Einarson 1959, 292.17–294.3. See also Galen, *PHP* 5.7.9-10; *PHP* 7.1.9.
[98] Especially 4.5.32: "To suppose that one is moved in accordance with one's assessment of events so that one's rejection of reason indicates a great passion– this is not good thinking. For it also happens as a result of a moderate or small passion." (trans. de Lacy 1981, pp. 264-270 = in Inwood 2022, pp. 139-142).

the wide-hipped and colder creatures tend to be more cowardly (συνάπτει δ' εἰκότως τοῖς λόγοις ταύτοις ὁ Ποσειδώνιος τὰ κατὰ τὸν φυσιογνώμονα φαινόμενα. καὶ γὰρ τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὅσα μὲν εὐρύστερνά τε καὶ θερμότερα, θυμικώτερα πάνθ' ὑπάρχειν φύσει, ὅσα δὲ πλατυΐσχιά τε καὶ ψυχρότερα, δειλότερα. Galen, *PHP* 5.5.22). Posidonius, according to Galen, also maintains that the passionate movements of the soul follow on the disposition of the body, which is often altered due to the environmental blend (ὡς τῶν παθητικῶν κινήσεων τῆς ψυχῆς ἑπομένων ἀεὶ τῇ διαθέσει τοῦ σώματος, ἣν ἐκ τῆς κατὰ τὸ περιέχον κράσεως οὐ κατ' ὀλίγον ἀλλοιοῦσθαι. Galen, *PHP* 5.5.23). Here, Galen mentions a potential Aristotelian, Hippocratean and Platonic influence on the differentiation of the blood's temperature and thickness or thinness (Galen, *PHP* 5.5.24-25).[99]

Despite the distinction between Posidonius and Chrysippus, some scholars argue for a possible reconciliation between Chrysippus and Posidonius's psychological accounts.[100] In the passage below, affections seemingly stem from the soul and also influence the body. However, there is a clear distinction between soul and body:

> ὅ γέ τοι Ποσειδώνιος τὰ μὲν εἶναι ψυχικὰ τὰ δὲ σωματικά, καὶ τὰ μὲν οὐ ψυχῆς περὶ ψυχὴν δὲ σωματικά, τὰ δ' οὐ σώματος περὶ σῶμα δὲ ψυχικά φησι· ψυχικὰ μὲν ἁπλῶς λέγων τὰ ἐν κρίσεσι καὶ ὑπολήψεσιν, οἷον ἐπιθυμίας φόβους ὀργάς, σωματικὰ δ' ἁπλῶς πυρετοὺς περιψύξεις πυκνώσεις ἀραιώσεις, περὶ ψυχὴν δὲ σωματικὰ ληθάργους μελαγχολίας δηγμοὺς φαντασίας διαχύσεις, ἀνάπαλιν δὲ περὶ σῶμα ψυχικὰ τρόμους καὶ ὠχριάσεις καὶ μεταβολὰς τοῦ εἴδους κατὰ φόβον ἢ λύπην.
>
> Plutarch, *On Desire and Grief 6*.

Here, Plutarch presents a Posidonian account of passions which is much closer to Chrysippus' cognitivist approach.[101] According to Inwood, it can be seen as a bridge between them, contrasting Galen's portrayal of the former as adhering to Platonizing views.[102] However, although Galen's testimony has Posidonius admit the existence of a cognitive element associated with the passions, he seems to have separated two distinct sources of passions, namely soul and body, whereas in Chrysippus, the soul is (finer) materialistic, and hence, there is no psychological dualism in the Chrysippean view. There is only one source from which passions derive, not many, even if these communicate or resemble each other, as shown in the passage above. There is evidence of Chrysippus's view of one single soul which is located in the heart region which is also the starting point of the passions (δείξαντες γὰρ, ὡς μὲν αὐτοὶ νομίζουσιν, ἅπαντα τὰ πάθη συνιστάμενα κατὰ τὴν καρδίαν, ὡς δὲ

[99] Likely, there can be an association between Posidonius's use of physiognomy and Seneca's similar comparison between the angry and a beast in the first book of his *De Ira.* However, the similarity only confirms that the philosophical use of physiognomy was a common practice among Stoics.
[100] Graver 2007, pp. 75-81.
[101] See also Lactantius, *On the Anger of God* 17.13, where the author cites Seneca who makes a reference to Posidonius on his view that the angry man desires to punish the one who he perceives he has harmed him.
[102] Inwood 2022, pp. 137, 142-143. For further literature on this approach, see Cooper 1998.

τἀληθὲς ἔχει, τὰ κατὰ μόνον τὸν θυμὸν, ἔπειτα προσλαβόντες, ὡς, ἔνθα ἂν ᾖ τὰ πάθη τῆς ψυχῆς, ἐνταῦθ' ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ λογιζόμενον αὐτῆς, οὕτως ἤδη περαίνουσιν, ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τὸ λογιστικὸν ὑπάρχειν. Galen, *PHP* 5.1.1-4). On the other hand, Galen makes his disagreement obvious since he does not believe that necessarily both θυμούμενον and λογιζόμενον must originate from one place (οὐ μὴν οὔθ' ὅτι καθ' ἕνα τόπον ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι τό τε θυμούμενον εἶναι καὶ τὸ λογιζόμενον (Galen, *PHP* 5.1.1-4). Inwood maintains that although Posidonius's view of passionate movements in the soul is admitted, an identification of the latter with separate parts of the soul, similar to the Platonic επιθυμητικόν and θυμοειδές, is Galen's addition in view of his anti-Stoic polemic.[103] Even if Galen exaggerates due to his anti-Stoic polemic or if Plutarch's account is to be taken more seriously despite his frequent misconceptions of Stoicism, there are still great differences between Posidonius and Chrysippus. Galen shows the contradiction between Chrysippus and Posidonius' disagreement on the number of parts of the soul. Galen intends to emphasise Posidonius' alienation from Chrysippus' psychological monism, showing that the soul consists of several powers and parts, namely three, according to which people desire, have passions and reason:

> Πρόκειται δὲ δεικνύειν, ὡς οὔτε καθ' ἓν μόριον τῆς ψυχῆς, οὔτε κατὰ μίαν αὐτῆς δύναμιν αἵ τε κρίσεις γίγνονται καὶ τὰ πάθη συνίσταται, καθάπερ ὁ Χρύσιππος ἔφασκεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δυνάμεις πλείους αὐτῆς εἰσιν ἑτερογενεῖς, καὶ μόρια πλείω. τὸ μὲν δὴ τὰς δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς τρεῖς εἶναι τὸν ἀριθμὸν, αἷς ἐπιθυμοῦμέν τε καὶ θυμούμεθα καὶ λογιζόμεθα, καὶ Ποσειδώνιος ὁμολογεῖ, καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης.[104]
>
> Galen, *PHP* 5.4.2-3.

The above differences between the two philosophers are far greater and cannot be reconciled, even if it is assumed that Galen exaggerated due to personal motives. Posidonius distinctly separates an irrational and a rational part, as well as body and soul, which introduces a psychological dichotomisation in his account that contrasts with Chrysippean—and Senecan—monism (*De Ira* 1.8.3).

Hence, Posidonius cannot accept that one can cure a πάθος by changing and analysing our judgement and set of beliefs. On the contrary, similarly to Plato, he believes in an education that balances and calms the passions through movements (EK 31 = *PHP,* 423 D.) from an early age so, that later the rational part of the soul (λογιστικόν) will be more easily cultivated. Hence, children must be trained to harmonise and navigate their passionate part of the soul (θυμοειδές) in accordance with reason so that λογιστικόν can rule the entire soul. The need for a proper education is urgent since θυμοειδές can function either in favour or against the λογιστικόν

[103] Inwood 2022, p. 138.
[104] The translation can be drawn from De Lacy & Einarson 1959, 312. Inwood 2022, p. 128 poses a matter of controversy as he quotes passages where Galen admits that Posidonius followed a kind of monism of the soul although Chrysippus's view was in the extreme side: "It makes sense that Plato calls the forms of soul 'forms' and 'parts' since he thinks that they are segregated in different locations of the body and differ greatly in their substance. Aristotle and Posidonius do not call them 'forms' or 'parts' but claim that they are powers of a single substance which takes its origin from the heart. But Chrysippus goes beyond unifying aggression and desire in one power and unifies them in one substance." *PHP* 6.2.5 (p. 368 de Lacy, F 146 E-K).

according to Plato in Book 4 of his *Republic.*

According to Posidonius, who seems to be following Plato's *Laws* 7, μουσική (music) is the prominent element in the right instruction of the young. He focuses on the specific types of melodies and tunes which lack verse, reminding us of Plato, who banished certain melodies that made the listener 'softer' and sad or kept the tunes that motivated and encouraged the men to go to war with brevity and in high spirits (Plato, *Republic* 398-399). Music is aimed at habituating the listener's passions. Posidonius thought that non-rational movements could be sedated only through non-rational elements (EK I68 = *PHP* v.6, 330 D), whereas rational parts could be cultivated through knowledge.

Chrysippus, on the other hand, did not accept the Platonic tripartite of the soul, which in his account was undivided (Galen, *PHP* 3.1.10). Plato was obliged to distinguish a rational and an irrational part because of his dualistic view of the world (mind-body dichotomy). The soul struggled inside the body because of the latter's desires. Most Stoics, on the other hand, were monists like Chrysippus, and for them, the soul was both body and matter. Hence, most of the Stoics talked about the *passions of the mind (*τά κατά την διάνοιαν πάθη*, SVF* 2.886/ LS 65H). Πάθος is a single reason which turns against itself (LS 65K, N). This is why Chrysippus believed that one needs to discuss with others in order to morally develop them. In contrast, Plato believed that a person, to be morally good, needs to exercise the irrational part of the soul from an early age (Plato*, Republic* 4),[105] to 'train' it to withhold its impulses. Hence, the agent cannot reason to achieve treatment. Πάθος can be balanced and 'tamed' only through irrational means. On the contrary, Chrysippus mentions an art that cures the soul, which suffers from a disease, and he also draws a parallel with medicine; what the latter is for the body, so is philosophy for the soul (*PHP* 5.2.22;[106] *SVF* 3. 471). Chrysippus maintained that λογικῇ to ψυχῇ functioned as ἰατρικὴ to σῶμά by analogy; there was a similarity between the two kinds of therapy (τῶν θεραπειῶν ὁμοιότητα, Galen *PHP* 5.2.438).[107] However, there were objections as this view was not always accepted.[108]

The comparison between Chrysippus and Posidonius's psychological theories aims to demonstrate that their differences cannot be ignored, whether Posidonius was a true dualist or merely incorporated Platonic ideas without fully subscribing to Plato's dualism. Moreover, this overview of Stoic action theory and analysis of two major Stoic models of the nature and origin of passions will enable us to turn to Seneca for a deeper understanding of his position.

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[105] See Kourfali 2013, p. 238.

[106] De Lacy 1981, p. 298.

[107] Galen, *PHP* 5.2: τί δὲ Χρύσιππος ἐν τῷ περὶ παθῶν ἠθικῷ γράφει ταυτί; οὔτε γὰρ περὶ τὸ νοσοῦν σῶμά ἐστί τις τέχνη, ἣν προσαγορεύομεν ἰατρικὴν, οὐχὶ δὲ καὶ περὶ τὴν νοσοῦσαν ψυχήν ἐστί τις τέχνη, οὔτ' ἐν τῇ κατὰ μέρος θεωρίᾳ τε καὶ θεραπείᾳ δεῖ λείπεσθαι ταύτην ἐκείνοις. διὸ καὶ, καθάπερ τῷ περὶ τὰ σώματα ἰατρῷ καθήκει τῶν τε συμβαινόντων αὐτοῖς παθῶν ἐντὸς εἶναι, ὡς εἰώθασι τοῦτο λέγειν, καὶ τῆς ἑκάστῳ οἰκείας θεραπείας, οὕτω καὶ τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ἰατρῷ ἐπιβάλλει ἀμφοτέρων τούτων ἐντὸς εἶναι, ὡς ἕνι ἄριστα. καὶ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει, μάθοι ἄν τις τῆς πρὸς ταῦτα ἀναλογίας παρατεθείσης ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἡ γὰρ πρὸς ταῦτα ἀντιπαρατείνουσα οἰκειότης παραστήσει, ὡς οἴομαι, καὶ τὴν τῶν θεραπειῶν ὁμοιότητα, καὶ ἔτι τὴν ἀμφοτέρων τῶν ἰατρειῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἀναλογίαν…καὶ τἄλλα ὅσα τούτοις ἑξῆς καταλέγει πάθη τε καὶ ἀῤῥωστήματα καὶ νοσήματα, κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν, φησὶ, τρόπον ἀνάλογόν τινα πᾶσι τούτοις καὶ ἐν ψυχῇ λογικῇ συνίσταταί τε καὶ ὀνομάζεται.

[108] On the contrast between *animi medicina* and the art of curing the body, see Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.1.

The Stoic notion of passion and the notion of προπάθειαι.[109]

I now turn to Seneca to reconstruct his view of the passions. More specifically, I argue that he presented his own novel approach to earlier debates by outlining a three-stage model for the origins of the passions more clearly. I will also claim that his account does not diverge from the mainstream Chrysippean theory — a conclusion that will have significant implications in the later chapters of this thesis. Despite some passages that might align with a Posidonian view, I argue for Seneca's opposition to psychological dualism in light on his consistent description of a strictly cognitive process in the formation of passions; therefore, Seneca agrees with Chrysippus that the passions are reflections of imperfect reason, not irrational forces over which the agent has no control, as he explained in his *De Ira*, 1.8.2-3, where he warns his readers against anger and discusses the tendency of the mind towards vice and passions. The pivotal point is the investigation of the notion of 'pre-passions' (προπάθειαι, Gell. 19.1.14–20; Seneca, *De Ira* 2.2.1; 2.4.1-2), which can elucidate the difficulties and ambiguities in Chrysippus's psychological theory of action regarding the involuntary aspects of emotion, especially when considering that these are voluntary. Προπάθεια also plays a fundamental role in the interpretation of Seneca's tragedies, relating to their educative function and the emotional training of the audience, and it refutes accusations against tragedy that cite its capacity to provoke intense passions.

Although almost all Stoics agreed with Chrysippus on the cognitive nature of the passions, there was some disagreement over some related aspects of Stoic action theory, some of which are relevant to προπάθειαι and Seneca's own position. More specifically, in a wide spectrum of further definitions (Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3. 13–14; Galen, *PHP* 4. 2. 1–6; Ps.-Andronicus, *On Emotions* 1 (*SVF* 3. 391); Stobaeus 2. 90 Wachsmuth; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7. 111–14.),[110] passions could be variously interpreted even within the Stoa. Zeno seems to have claimed that the passions are themselves contractions and expansions, whereas Chrysippus introduced the cognitive element as a causal factor to the term πάθος. Hence, Chrysippus believes that a πάθος is a two-fold judgement (good/bad/appropriate), whereas Zeno focused more on the physical movements due to the physicality of the soul, on the movement of the soul (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7. 110; Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.2, 47; *De Officiis* 1.136; Stobaeus 2. 88. 9 Wachsmuth, *SVF* 1.205), and the passions as contractions and expansions per se (Galen, *PHP* 4.2.5–6; 4.3.1–2; 5.1.4; 5.6.42) -the latter being movements,[111] seeing every emotion as a πτοία (Stobaeus 2.39.5 Wachsmuth; *SVF* 1.206), deriving from the verb πτοέω or alternatively, πτοιέω, meaning either to terrify and scare or to flutter and excite by any passion.[112]

However, Zeno does not rule out the cognitive element in the formation of passions; he believes that judgements are the cause (αἴτιον) of the contractions and expansions meaning passions (leaning away, *declinatio*, and ἔκκλησις, reaching, ὄρεξις, *appetition,* appetite and desire) or, in other words, that the irrational elevations happen because of the presence of a perceived good (Stobaeus 2.90 Wachsmuth; Diogenes Laertius,

[109] On the *De Ira*, see Cooper and Procope 1995, pp. 3-14; Harris 2001; Kaster & Nussbaum 2010, pp. 3-13.
[110] See also De Lacy 1981, p. 238.
[111] Sorabji 2000, p. 34.
[112] Liddell & Scott 1925, πτοέω.

Lives 7.114). He, therefore, does not differ from Chrysippus on the cognitive nature of the passions, which are for both thinkers identified as judgments. Instead, the difference seems to be that Zeno placed more emphasis on how cognitive judgements led to the physical movements in the soul.

Richard Sorabji's speculation that Chrysippus' development of the notion of the passions was an important outcome and crucial to the later Stoics' views is right; the contractions and expansions of the mind cannot be the passions themselves, but they are only a pre-emotional state, 'preceding' and also 'accompanying' a πάθος,[113] exactly as the first movements and disturbances of mind which Seneca mentions in his *De Ira*, as will be shown later on. On the other hand, Inwood seems to believe that there is no difference except for the intensity of the contraction, which tends to be smaller but is not caused by judgment; only by a mere appearance.[114] Sorabji rightly claims[115] that the latter view is not in accordance with the existing texts, and that the theory of preliminary movements not being emotions yet contributes to the educational and therapeutic function they serve, as they help the agent halt their passion before it develops into a full-blown πάθος.

Furthermore, Chrysippus does not deny the existence of contractions and expansions as he admits that when a fresh opinion of evil is present (a judgment), the soul contracts and distress is produced (Galen, *PHP* 4.7.4). Sorabji claims that although not 'a component', the contractions are necessary concomitants to Chrysippus' πάθη.[116]

There is some confusion on whether the preliminary contractions are physical or psychological. There is already cited evidence that they are physical movements, but they also have a psychological character in the sense that one can feel and sense them.[117] In Galen, there is evidence that a wide range of movements is involved in emotion, such as δήξεις (bites) or *contractiunculae,* which are little but sharp contractions (Galen, *PHP* 2.8.4; 3.1.25; 3.5.43–4; 3.7.4).[118] Contractions and bites are connected to λύπη. However, λύπη is associated with fear and anger, as there is some fluidity between these passions.[119] Chrysippus held that δήξεις occur in the heart, which is the location[120] and the control system of one's soul and, therefore, mind, where all the physical movements are experienced, especially bites.[121] Chrysippus also maintains:

> Κοινῇ δέ μοι δοκοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ φέρεσθαι ἐπὶ τοῦτο ὡσανεὶ συναισθανόμενοι περὶ τὸν θώρακα αὐτοῖς τῶν κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν παθῶν γιγνομένων καὶ μάλιστα καθ' ὃν ἡ καρδία τέτακται τόπον, οἷον μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν λυπῶν καὶ τῶν φόβων καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ὀργῆς καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ θυμοῦ' <ὡσανεὶ γὰρ> ἐκ τῆς καρδίας

[113] Sorabji 2000, p. 35.
[114] Inwood 1985, pp. 178, 180.
[115] Sorabji 2000, pp. 35-36; see also Chapter 11.
[116] Sorabji 2000, p. 36.
[117] Sorabji 2000, p. 38.
[118] For the Latin equivalent of δήξις, *contractiunculae*, and bites, see Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.82–3; 4.14–15; Galen, *PHP* 4.3.2.
[119] Sorabji 2000.
[120] More in Tieleman 1996.
[121] 'You will find that the same holds with the argument from the bite (dēxis) in cases of distress. For the bite is clearly (enargōs) in the mouth of the stomach, but they refer it to the heart.' (Galen, *PHP* 2.8.4; cf. 2.8.8; 2.8.18, translations drawn from Lacy 1981, pp. 158, 160).

ἀναθυμιωμένου καὶ ὠθουμένου ἐκτὸς ἐπὶ τινα καὶ ἐμφυσῶντος τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ τὰς χεῖρας γίγνεσθαι ἡμῖν ἐμφάσεις.[122]

Galen, *PHP* 3.1.25.

In this passage, Chrysippus admits a physical sensation in view of an impression that emerges as a vapour from out of the heart. However, Chrysippus says that people experience this sensation *as if* they were conscious (συναισθανόμενοι). He wants to emphasise that these physical sensations occur before the passion without being passions themselves, since Chrysippus is against their identification.[123] He talks about the movements that precede or accompany passions, which function as symptoms of a disease similar to the bodily disturbances when one is about to get sick ('For just as when our foot or head hurts the pain occurs in those places, so too we are conscious (συναισθανόμεθα) in a case of distress (λύπη) of pain (ἀλγηδών) occurring in the thorax.' Galen, *PHP* 3.7.4).[124] Hence, Chrysippus refers to the perception of ταραχή (disturbance) and movements and not of the mind (Sorabji observes the difference in Galen, *PHP* 2.7.8 and 10).[125] In contrast, Tieleman[126] does not follow the same path as he does not acknowledge Sorabji's observation. However, the distinction between perceiving the initial movements or starting points and the passions per se is of crucial importance in the current project, as προπάθειαι are critical to Seneca's account of passions and his portrayal of them in his dramas. Furthermore, Justin Gosling and Christopher Taylor explain that the occurrence of the first movement is owned to the appearance of pleasant or unpleasant, good or evil appearances; it does not relate to the mind's assent to the given appearance since it is an involuntary reaction and, therefore, does not need a συγκατάθεσις as πάθος does.[127]

The emphasis on the involuntary nature of the first movements in contrast to the conscious assent required to generate a πάθος is crucial for understanding Seneca's elaboration of the Chrysippean doctrine. This is because some scholars have argued that Seneca's theory of the passions relied on Posidonius' non-monist account of the soul and that Seneca seemed to discuss instances of emotions which did not require assent. I argue against this interpretation in what follows, laying particular emphasis on several important and decisive passages from *De Ira* (e.g. 2.3.4).

Incidents of first movements occur not only when λύπη is about to develop; they occur both in the case of fear, which involves an internal sinking or the feeling of mass in the central part of the mind,[128] and in the case of anger, which is associated with a sensation of blowing vapour from out of the heart (Galen, *PHP* 3.1.25). The latter movement cannot but remind the reader of Seneca's description of the angry man who experiences a

[122] Translation can be drawn from Lacy 1981, p. 172. See also 2.7.8 and 2.7.9.
[123] Sorabji 2000, p. 39.
[124] The translation can be drawn from De Lacy & Einarson 1959, p. 212.
[125] Sorabji 2000, p. 39.
[126] Tieleman 1996, pp. 2-3, 162-163, 233.
[127] Gosling & Taylor 1982, pp. 426-427.
[128] Sorabji associates the term συνάρθοίσεις to the massing, see Sorabji 2000, p. 40, ft 114 for further analysis.

certain heat and blood boiling coming from the heart and breast, the warmest part of the body (*De Ira* 2.19.3-4).

To delve more into the notion of προπάθειαι, it would be useful to distinguish the term from the term 'passion'. The Stoics have often been accused of austerity in their emotional life since ἀπάθεια is a virtuous state which is not necessary, but it significantly helps one to reach εὐδαιμονία and is a sage's trait (ἀπαθῆ εἶναι τὸν σοφόν; D.L. 7.117). However, they allowed for some emotional and physical involuntary disturbances, which could develop into full passions, but they could also allow the person to grow and achieve moral integrity. The concept of προπάθειαι is evident both in the early Stoa and the Stoics of the Roman Empire. Plutarch calls them τὰ πρῶτα συμπτώματα νόσου (Plutarch, 2.127D), meaning that προπάθειαι are the premonitory symptoms of a disease.[129] The Stoics did regard the term to have a similar meaning, if not the exact one, to that of Plutarch's. In a nutshell, προπάθεια is a first movement, a reaction precedent of the passion, a thought not acted upon (*De Ira* 2.3.4).[130] These feelings, also discussed in Seneca, are disturbances of the body (*corporis hos esse pulsus*, Seneca, *De Ira* 2.3.3) and not passion (*adfectus*) per se:

> *Nihil ex his, quae animum fortuito impellunt, adfectus vocari debet; ista, ut ita dicam, patitur magis animus quam facit. Ergo adfectus est non ad oblatas rerum species moveri, sed permittere se illis et hunc fortuitum motum prosequi. Nam si quis pallorem et lacrimas procidentis et irritationem umoris obsceni altumve suspirium et oculos subito acriores aut quid his simile indicium adfectus animique signum putat, fallitur nec intellegit corporis hos esse pulsus.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 2.3.1-4.

Therefore, it is paramount to pay attention to the nature and the cause of these feelings, such as paleness, tears and brightening of the eyes, among others; they are provoked by chance giving the mind notice (*quae animum fortuito impellunt*) and do not reflect the mind but the body. Seneca adduces more examples of preliminary feelings:

> *Omnes enim motus, qui non voluntate nostra fiunt, invicti et inevitabiles sunt, ut horror frigida aspersis, ad quosdam tactus aspernatio; ad peiores nuntios subriguntur pili et rubor ad improba verba suffunditur sequiturque vertigo praerupta cernentis. Quorum quia nihil in nostra potestate est, nulla quo minus fiant ratio persuadet.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 2.1.1-2.

[129] LSJ Dictionary, προπάθεια.
[130] Graver 1999, p. 300. On προπάθειαι, see more in Inwood 1993, pp. 164-81; Sorabji 1998; Rist 1989, 1999-2003; Abel 1963.

Therefore, a first movement is unavoidable as it does not listen to the laws of reason. Seneca's next passages enhance the distinction between passion and a disturbance or first movement even more:

> *Ira non moveri tantum debet sed excurrere; est enim impetus; numquam autem impetus sine adsensu mentis est, neque enim fieri potest ut de ultione et poena agatur animo nesciente.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 2.3.4.

Here, Seneca distinguishes *adfectus* from a mere disturbance of the mind, which is the pre-passion. *Adfectus* (passion), although an impulse (*impetus*), requires the aid of reason and the assent of the mind to form (*adsensu mentis, De Ira* 2.3.24). Seneca employs the example of a man who perceives himself injured and wishes to take revenge, but his mind does not give permission for such an act, and as a result, the man calms down (*De Ira* 2.3.4). No fully-formed passion of anger is formed here since the impulse was dissuaded by the rational mind, whereas real anger goes beyond the limits of reason after the mind gives assent and actively chooses vengeance (*De Ira* 2.3.4-5). Hence, *adfectus* relates to a rational mental procedure, whereas pre-passions do not:

> *Ira praeceptis fugatur; est enim voluntarium animi vitium, non ex his, quae condicione quadam humanae sortis eveniunt ideoque etiam sapientissimis accidunt, inter quae et primus ille ictus animi ponendus est, qui nos post opinionem iniuriae movet. Hic subit etiam inter ludicra scaenae spectacula et lectiones rerum vetustarum.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira*. 2.2.2-3.

Therefore, when one believes that one has wronged, the 'first blow of the mind'[131] is beyond one's capacity to prevent it from happening because it is not caused by a rational mechanism. This is why this preliminary disturbance is not a passion per se; *Ergo prima illa agitatio animi, quam species iniuriae incussit, non magis ira est quam ipsa iniuriae species.* ('Therefore that primary disturbance of the mind which is excited by the impression of injury is no more anger than the impression of injury is itself anger.' *De Ira* 2.3.5).

Furthermore, Seneca maintains that these certain preliminary feelings, which, although unavoidable, are still under one's control: *Quarundam rerum initia in nostra potestate sunt, ulteriora nos vi sua rapiunt nec regressum relinquunt* ('The starting points of some things are in our power but their further developments sweep us along in their violence and don't permit us to go back', [132] *De Ira* 1.7.4). He goes on to use the Chrysippean analogy of the running body's impetus to show the difference between the *agitatio* and the fully developed *adfectus*:

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[131] I borrowed the term from the translation of the same passage in Inwood 2023, p. 325.
[132] I used Inwood's translation in Inwood 2023, p. 322 because I find the translation of προπάθειαι as 'starting points' more useful to my argument since it emphasises the precedence of προπάθεια in relation to the πάθος or *adfectus*.

Ut in praeceps datis corporibus nullum sui arbitrium est nec resistere morarive deiecta potuerunt, sed consilium omne et paenitentiam irrevocabilis praecipitatio abscidit et non licet eo non pervenire, quo non ire licuisset, ita animus si in iram, amorem aliosque se proiecit adfectus, non permittitur reprimere impetum; rapiat illum oportet et ad imum agat pondus suum et vitiorum natura proclivis.

Seneca, *De Ira* 1.7.4.

There is no way to avoid the destructive consequences of the 'running passion' although its development was voluntary. On the contrary, the first movements occur involuntarily, but their development is controlled by the agent. Gellius, who quotes Panaetius in his *Attic Nights* 12.5.10-11, also provides another helpful testimony on the Stoic concept of προπάθειαι. The position advanced here is that these preliminary disturbances are unavoidable even for the sage since they are not controlled by reason or judgment:

Haec ergo vir sapiens tolerare et exanclare potest, non admittere omnino in sensum sui non potest; ἀναλγησία enim atque ἀπάθεια non meo tantum," inquit, "sed quorundam etiam ex eadem ortico prudentiorum hominum, sicuti iudicio Panaetii, gravis atque docti viri, inprobata abiectaque est.

Gellius, *Attic Nights* 12.5.10-11.[133]

After explaining the involuntary nature of the first movement, he goes on to explain why they are uncontrollable; *Haec enim et pleraque alia non voluntas nec consilium nec ratio moderatur, set naturae necessitatisque decreta sunt.* ('For these and many other things are not under the control of the will, the judgment, or the reason, but are decrees of nature and of necessity.' Gellius, *Attic Nights* 12.5.12). This account agrees fully with Seneca's position: passions are rational and, thus, controllable; προπάθειαι are not rational, hence their involuntary nature.

It is possible, then, even unavoidable, to feel 'bites' without a fully developed passion; one characteristic example is the passion of grief (which falls under the umbrella of λύπη; one can experience a stinging sensation at the loss of a loved one, cry and grieve, but she can remain vigilant so that she doesn't cultivate and succumb in pathological emotion.[134] Seneca advises Marcia to cease her continuous and long mourning, which poisons her (*Dial.* 1.7.1-1.8.3). However, it was natural and reasonable to feel a preliminary involuntary feeling.

Furthermore, προπάθεια or *prima agitatio animi* (the primary disturbance of the mind) can prove fruitful and useful in one's moral development since it is a trigger, which turns one's attention to a potential danger. If managed, pre-passions can be seen as warnings, and therefore, the student or the wise man can work on their reasoning and, therefore, their mental state so that they prevent the formation of an *adfectus*. Pope uses a 'contagion metaphor' to combine the discussions on mental passions and physical diseases during the early Stoa

[133] See Holford-Strevens 2003 for an analysis of the textual issue in Gellius' *Attic Nights,* which contains many references and quotations from earlier texts and sources.
[134] Pope 2020, p. 26.

(*SVF* 3.471) and tailor them to the concept of προπάθεια: 'Properly handled, a προπάθεια is an early stage response that is like an open bottle of contagion which a student or *sapiens* chooses to seal off and ultimately reject as a unit threatening infection and ensuing moral failure.'[135] The mastery of the Stoic intellectual system is manifested through the latter's internal integrity and cohesion; προπάθεια and πάθη function as physical diseases; the former is similar to a symptom whose existence is beneficial since it warns of a potentially greater problem, whereas if left untreated, the preliminary disturbance transforms into a disease, a real passion. On a cognitive and ethical level, there are mechanisms which navigate the whole procedure; the agent needs to choose and seal off the open bottle which is about to contaminate the whole mind and body. Therefore, here one sees the Stoic theory of indifferents and the psychological model of action perfectly intertwined; people need to deliberately make a choice about how to handle the preliminary response to a stimulus and, therefore, correct their judgment and reasoning so that they prevent the passion-disease from developing. On another level, the mental and physical aspects are combined since προπάθειαι are characterised both as disturbances of the mind and the body; in essence, there is no real difference since, according to Stoic physics, mental events are also physical movements.[136]

Therefore, the road to Stoic moral and emotional development passes through the analysis and processing of the προπάθειαι. Epictetus, who is also an example of a Stoic philosopher, claimed that the προκόπτων (the Stoic-in-progress) needed to acknowledge, accept and edit his pre-passions (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.4.1). Most importantly to the current project, Seneca admits the great difficulty the προπάθειαι cause; they are uninvited pre-emotional raids one needs to resist so that he or she does not fall into a pathological state by allowing the preliminary incursion to become a passion (Seneca, *Epistles* 57.1-6).[137] Seneca, in warning against the passion of love (Seneca, *Epistles* 116.5-6) – and all of the passions (*hoc ego de omnibus adfectibus dico*, *Epistle* 116.6), quotes Panaetius who although advises abstinence from love, he claims that only the Stoic sage could perhaps fall in love since he can be aware of the negative experiences, which are probably the προπάθειαι since the sage does not experience the affective reaction of πάθος.[138] Seneca undoubtedly has the προπάθειαι in mind since he uses '*lacrimas'* as an example of the sage's reaction to which does not assent:

> *Sapienti non sollicite custodire se tutum est, et lacrimas suas et voluptates ubi volet sistet; nobis quia non est regredi facile, optimum est omnino non progredi.*[139]
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 116.4-5.

The educational function of the first movements is evident; one of the main features in the Stoic doctrine is the importance of training in evaluating appearances and impressions and withholding one's assent. The Stoic

[135] Pope, 2020, pp. 26-27.
[136] For corporeality of the passions, see Chapter 3.
[137] See also Veyne 2003, pp. 2-6.
[138] Long 2022, p. 81.
[139] Seneca uses the same example in his *De Ira* 2.3.1-4, where he talks about the preliminary stage of passions and argues that falling tears (*lacrimas procidentis*) are not real passions, as shown earlier on p.28 of the current thesis.

training consists of being aware of and discerning the appearance from the assent so that a reckless and almost automatic assent to a false appearance is avoided.[140] The key point is to discern the indifferents and the intrinsically worthy things in life. Seneca appears to agree with the mainstream orthodox doctrine that what one desires may have a negative impact on oneself. If one judges that something is important and of true value when only virtue claims this position, one is bound to follow an erroneous path. Seneca mentions elsewhere that hope brings fear; *spem metus sequitur* ('Fear follows hope.' *Epistles* 5.8). By extension, if one cures hope, she also cures fear: *Apud Hecatonem nostrum inveni cupiditatium finem etiam ad timoris remedia proficere. "Desines," inquit, "timere, si sperare desieris."* ('I find in the writings of our Hecato that the limiting of desires helps also to cure fears: "Cease to hope," he says, "and you will cease to fear."' *Epistles* 5.7).

Examples of passions shifting from one to another highlight how proper management of initial reactions can have healing effects. For someone to heal her hope, she must correct her mistaken belief that reaching something she values is important, when in fact it is not important but indifferent. Once she realises it is not important, she will stop hoping. Consequently, fear is also cured or prevented, as there will be no fear of losing or not obtaining something she doesn't consider valuable or important.

The educative role of the first movements or προπάθειαι in Seneca's plays.

Some of the language and examples in this section of *De Ira* offer critical evidence that Seneca consciously and intentionally turned to drama for an illustration of his psychological model of passions—I will return to the relevance of this passage for my broader argument about his use of tragedy in the service of Stoicism. In *De Ira* 2.2.3, Seneca mentions that people experience a mental shock when watching a play on stage (*Hic subit etiam inter ludicra scaenae spectacula*). Therefore, the emotional reaction of the audience when watching a play is a preliminary disturbance. He continues:

> *Cantus nos nonnumquam et citata modulatio instigat Martiusque ille tubarum sonus; movet mentes et atrox pictura et iustissimorum suppliciorum tristis adspectus; inde est quod adridemus ridentibus et contristat nos turba maerentium et effervescimus ad aliena certamina. Quae non sunt irae, non magis quam tristitia est, quae ad conspectum mimici naufragii contrahit frontem, non magis quam timor, qui Hannibale post Cannas moenia circumsidente lectorum percurrit animos, sed omnia ista motus sunt animorum moveri nolentium nec adfectus sed principia proludentia adfectibus.*[141]
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 2.2.4-6.

[140] Sorabji 2000, p. 42.

[141] Here, Inwood's translation would be preferable since he translated the term *animorum moveri* as 'movements of the mind' instead of 'emotions of the mind' as is translated in Basore 1928, p. 171. The latter defeats the purpose of the thesis and renders the original text abstruse, since Seneca, here, emphasises that the preliminary disturbances and sensations are not emotions.

Singing has an emotional effect on humans, as does a shocking picture and a sad sight. These, however, are not passions; they are preliminary sensations that might lead to passions but not necessarily do so. Experiences such as watching a play, melancholic paintings and appearances have the ability to stir the mind without the agent's will. In connection with those passages, I would like to point out to the passage 3.9.1. in Seneca's *De Ira*, where he suggests pleasant arts, such as reading poetry or history, as practical techniques to divert one's mind and soothe one's anger. The nature of such experiences and the therapeutic function of προπάθειαι if handled properly, render various artistic forms adequate preventive and therapeutic remedies:

> *Studia quoque graviora iracundis omittenda sunt aut certe citra lassitudinem exercenda, et animus non inter plura versandus, sed artibus amoenis tradendus. Lectio illum carminum obleniat et historia fabulis detineat.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 3.9.1.

Therefore, I suggest that these passages demonstrate that my link between Seneca's Stoic theory of passions and his dramas is by no means arbitrary—Seneca himself made the connection. In the following chapters, I will endeavour to substantiate this connection through close analysis of selected passages of the plays; here, I will limit myself to outlining a hypothesis of his intentions, namely that tragedy offered a powerful tool for facilitating the audience or reader's moral development through what Martha Nussbaum has called 'the therapy of desire.'[142] First, reading poetry or watching a staged play arouses an emotional reaction which is only a preliminary disturbance to the mind and, thus, is not harmful to the agent. On the contrary, they are beneficial and healing; *sic mentes aegras studia laeta permulcent* ('pleasant pursuits soothe the troubled mind', *De Ira* 3.9.3). Second, προπάθειαι function as symptoms of the mental disease and, therefore, are involuntary warnings of an upcoming possible emotional state. Therefore, the audience will be able to work on their passions through the emotional reaction caused by Senecan drama; they will be moved by the actors' expressions and experiences (*inde est quod adridemus ridentibus et contristat nos turba maerentium et effervescimus ad aliena certamina*, *De Ira* 2.2.4-6) and they will work on the tragic heroes' vices but also their own from a safe distance, as a compassionate doctor.

<u>The Role of Appropriation and Emotional development in Seneca's view as a teacher.</u>

The current section will discuss the therapeutic role which the Stoic concept of appropriation played in Seneca's tragedies. It will, therefore, be useful to briefly outline two aspects of appropriation (οἰκείωσις), which are integral to a better understanding of the connection between the Stoic psychological model and Seneca's educational views. I will argue that Seneca's dramatic works reflected his natural human disposition to help

[142] Nussbaum 1994.

fellow rational beings and that these literary works aimed to stimulate a desire in his audience or readers to begin their own course of Stoic emotional therapy. For this reason, I will cite Cicero's passages in conjunction with Seneca's points since Cicero portrays some Stoic views in his works, such as in his *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5, which enhance the Stoic philosophical influence on Seneca.

There are two main aspects of appropriation, which aim at two different objects of attention; one is the appropriation of oneself or one's constitution (σύστασις),[143] whereas the second is the other-benefiting disposition, meaning care for people of one's kind. The former is mediated by self-consciousness (alternatively self-awareness or self-perception), which permits the agent to perceive one's body as a psychophysical unit which gives one the resources for acting according to one's nature (Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* 4.38-53/ LS B (5-9)).[144] Therefore, by nature, one is inclined to observe oneself and be aware of the psychophysical events that take place. Observation and self-consciousness are the first steps to ethical progress, as Seneca maintained; the angry man who sees himself in the mirror is already a changed man (Seneca, *De Ira* 1.36). Appropriation (οἰκείωσις) is understood as the natural developmental process through which one identifies the good of other rational beings as one's own (οἰκείος) good. The initial stage of this process is expressed by the basic natural motives (innate in both humans and animals) of self-preservation and parental love. Cicero offers a clear picture of this stage of οἰκείωσις since it portrays a more detailed view of the advanced stages of human ethical progress, which require the use of one's rational faculties (Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.16-22; 3.62-68).[145]

As shown in later chapters, the tragedies are filled with examples of heroes and heroines who are aware of their passions and the irrationality of their actions. Their instinctive internal mechanisms prompt them to recognise these, which is why they develop inner mental conflicts since their natural inclinations and predispositions clash with their passions—that is, with their erroneous propositional judgements and beliefs.[146]

Seneca, in his *Epistle* 121.15-16, claims that although the ability of appropriation is constant throughout one's life, one's constitution changes as one's rationality grows and matures:[147] *Sic, quamvis alia atque alia cuique constitutio sit, conciliatio constitutionis suae eadem est.* ('Thus, although each has at different times a different constitution, the adaptation of each to its constitution is the same.' Seneca, *Epistle* 121.16).

Ethical development consists of a continuous and constant moral improvement[148] during which one learns to discern virtuous from evil actions, right from wrong, and, consequently, to make the right selection of indifferents and choices. Ethical development as appropriation is a continuous exercise of reason after a certain age (Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.21 /LS 59 D 4), which enables ethical understanding and informs

[143] Seneca, *Epistles* 121.16: The distinction between oneself and constitution is basically that the latter changes in becoming more rational as one's moral progress is actualised, whereas the former is life-long. Gill 2006, pp. 44-45; Σύστασις (constitution) is the ruling centre (ἡγεμονικόν), which is related to the body (Seneca, *Epistles* 121.10), which is linked to rationality and sociability (121.14-16); more in Gill 2023, text to nn. 57-64.
[144] See also Ramelli 2009, p. 5. On self-perception, see Gill 2023, p. 169; 2006, pp. 38-43; Long 1996, h. 11.
[145] On the differences between Cicero's *Tusculanae Disputationes* and *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, see Gill 2015. On the distinctions between Cicero's viewpoints and the Stoics, see Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.33-4, 5.40, 5.43, 5.45, 5.47.
[146] Gill 2023, p. 160.
[147] See further Inwood 2017, pp. 339-342; Klein 2016, pp. 160-162; Gill 2023, pp. 181-186.
[148] On consistency and moral improvement according to nature, see LS 63 A, B, C.

one's motivations, beliefs, values and actions. Gill maintains that the theory of appropriation points to the development of human motivation and, therefore, the selection of appropriate actions (καθήκοντα, LS 59).[149] Gill's connection is reasonable since rationality informs one's belief system and choices, and ethical appropriation involves self-awareness and recognition of one's thoughts and values. Hence, the two complement each other, as self-consciousness renders one aware of their behaviour, and rationality helps one process and improve oneself according to nature. In this way, ethical development is increasingly accentuated, especially in the final stage of appropriation in adult life.[150] It is in this stage when the human agent realises and recognises the superiority of virtue in contrast to the preferred indifferents and adjusts his or her motivation accordingly. Therefore, virtue is registered as the most valuable of all, and one committing righteous and virtuous actions (Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 4.26-39).[151] If need be, one can reach happiness without the presence of preferred indifferent (Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.29; 3.42).

The second aspect of appropriation, meaning the other-directed actions and behaviours, stems from an instinctive drive to procreate, which helps direct us toward a concern for others, as manifested in parental love:

> *Quare ut perspicuum est natura nos a dolore abhorrere, sic apparet a natura ipsa ut eos quos genuerimus amemus impelli.*[152]
>
> Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.62-63.

This disposition is evident in adult life and reflects human rationality.[153] In *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.62-64, Cicero regards the motives of parental love and human sociability as built into human nature; they mirror universal providence. Therefore, the human reason which informs one's actions reflects universal reason in nature. Cicero reports that the most significant motives for society are a sense of community and the desire to procreate and care for one's offspring (*On Duties* 1.50-59). These basic motives and other forms of other-benefiting actions manifest the same underlying disposition to appropriate others of one's kind (Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.64-68).[154] The other-directed human disposition is closely related to the Stoic concept of a universal community which is constituted by human beings and gods (LS 67 L; Cicero N.D. 2.133, 154).[155]

Ethical improvement requires both appropriation of one's constitution and care for others to be deemed complete; when this is the case, an agent can be said to possess the virtue of benevolence (*bonitas*, Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.66) and justice, a theory which goes back to Chrysippus (Plu., *Sto*. *REpistles*

[149] Gill 2023, pp. 186-193; 2017, p. 102.
[150] On the three stages of appropriation and an argumentative debate, see Gill 2004b, 103-105; 2006, 146-150, 157-159.
[151] Gill 2006, pp. 168-169; 2016a, 229-230. For a different view, see Klein 2016, pp. 156-157.
[152] The translation can be drawn from Rackham 1971. See also Gill 2023, p. 171.
[153] Gill 2023, p. 171.
[154] Gill 2023, pp. 196-198
[155] Schofield 1991, Chapter 3; Vogt 2008, Chapter 3.

1038 B = LS 57 E),[156] who thought that benefiting others is a very basic and crucial step towards justice and even the beasts care for their offspring and their needs (*On Justice*, Book 1; Plu. *REpistles* 1038 B = LS 57 E).[157]

Furthermore, protecting and caring for others with whom one forms a common society is more important than caring for oneself:

> *Ut enim leges omnium salutem singulorum saluti anteponunt, sic vir bonus et sapiens et legibus parens et civilis offici non ignarus utilitati omnium plus quam unius alicuius aut suae consulit.*
>
> Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.64.

Human beings are inclined to perform other-benefiting actions by their own nature, a behaviour which they realise and accentuate along with the growth of rationality. Therefore, it is natural to help others in every way they can when humans reach an advanced stage of ethical development, as appropriating and recognising the good of others as an essential component of one's own good. It can be inferred that philosophers, especially, are disposed to benefit others through teaching. As seen in his *Epistulae* 121.15-16, Seneca thought that one's constitution develops along with one's rationality. In fact, it is crucial for people to help each other in every possible way, especially through teaching, as Cicero confirms:

> *Impellimur autem natura ut prodesse velimus quam plurimis in primisque docendo rationibusque prudentiae tradendis. Itaque non facile est invenire qui quod sciat ipse non tradat alteri; ita non solum ad discendum propensi sumus verum etiam ad docendum.*
>
> Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.65-66.

Therefore, there is a natural inclination for the fully ethically developed man to teach in order to benefit others of his kind as his basic motives stipulate.[158] Especially those who possess 'exceptional gifts…like Hercules and Liber…feel a natural impulse to be the protectors of the human race' (*sic ii qui valent opibus atque id facere possunt, ut de Hercule et de Libero accepimus, ad servandum genus hominum natura incitantur.* Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 3.66).

What is the ethical teacher supposed to teach his fellow citizens in order to benefit them? The most valuable lesson a philosopher could offer his fellow men is the realisation of what is truly valuable, meaning virtue, and the real nature of the indifferents; consequently, people would develop a reasoning more fitting to universal reason, and they would perform appropriate actions, banishing passions from their minds.

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[156] Gill 2023, p. 202.
[157] Schofield 1995, pp. 193-199.
[158] Annas and Woolf 2021.

The use of Euripides' *Medea* as an example of a tragic heroine whose reasoning and belief system came into contrast with her own nature, is an ideal means to teach the audience how to avoid selecting indifferents and valuing them more than virtue by showing them what tragedy befalls the ones who fall prey to their own mind and emotions. In the same vein, the following chapters will show that Seneca employs his tragedies to teach, as his nature stipulates, the audience the true value of indifferents, the ugliness of the passions created by the wrong estimation of the indifferents and the world, and the terrifying consequences which the utter defeat of reason brings.

Hence, there are other forms of other-directed roles, such as the other-benefiting role of the ethical teacher, who is usually a philosopher.[159] Seneca then believed that a philosopher is inherently bound to help others by guiding them towards moral progress by whichever means he could. He specifically suggests that even in a threatening environment where free speech is not permitted (as in imperial Rome), one needs to act beneficially to others in more passive ways, which nevertheless promote ethical development. The highest Good is to live according to Nature: *Solemus dicere summum bonum esse secundum naturam vivere.* ('We are fond of saying that the highest good is to live according to Nature.' *De Otio* 4.1.5). Seneca acknowledges the importance of Nature, which appoints to humans the responsibility of contemplation and its practical manifestation, which is action (*et contemplationi rerum et actioni, De Otio* 4.1.5.) By nature, human beings contemplate and desire knowledge, which is stirred by tales of every sort (*omnis fabulas*, *De Otio* 4.1.5): *Hoc non erit probatum, si se unusquisque consuluerit, quantam cupidinem habeat ignota noscendi, quam ad omnis fabulas excitetur?* ('Will not this be proved if each one of us shall take counsel simply of himself, and ponder how great is his desire to gain knowledge of the unknown, and how this desire is stirred by tales of every sort?' *De Otio*, 4.1.5). Therefore, Seneca, as an ethical teacher, can grant the magnificent gift of knowledge or the awakening of this desire in people through the tales depicted in his tragedies. In this manner, he completes his ethical development since he benefits others of his kind by instilling the desire to learn in them and teaching them to distinguish the *indifferentia* from the virtues.

Ethical development, as appropriation, has cognitive content in that one needs to adjust one's judgments, values, and belief system in accordance with virtue and nature, which plays a significant role in one's moral progress. In the course of rational judgement leading to actions, passions mediate, which are triggered by the cognitive procedures occurring in one's rational faculties before the stage of action. Therefore, the Stoic accounts of passions and appropriation are intertwined, especially when it comes to the therapy of passions, which averts catastrophic breakdowns of reasoning and promotes moral development and maturity.

The emotional aspect of moral development is also responsible for one's ethical corruption. The latter happens when the agent experiences defective ethical mental and emotional states, which are characterised by internal conflicts which lack harmony, order, structure and consistency (LS 65 A, G, J), traits of virtue (Ls 60 Q, 61 A, 63 L-M, 65 W). According to the Stoic model, psychological harmony is based on the agreement of

[159] In his *Epistles* 76.1-3, Seneca mentions that even older men should go to a philosopher's lectures to learn about virtue, which is the only good (*Epistles* 76.21). On the role of *exempla* and the educational value of *Epistles*, see Schafer 2011.

rational impressions and reasoning, and the motives, emotions and desires.[160] Emotions are a subdivision of motives (Stob. 10, 2.88.8-12)[161] and they guide our actions. Therefore, to be fully ethically developed, one needs to banish passions from one's soul through rational procedures. According to Cicero, certain predispositions (εὐεμπτωσίαι) render people attracted by preferred indifferent and, subsequently, liable to passions (Cic. *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.24-76; Stob. 10e, 2.93.1-13).[162] Corruption consists of the 'persuasiveness of things from without' and 'the teaching or influence of our associates' (D.L. 7.89; Galen, *PHP* 5.5.14, 19).[163] Therefore, the ethical teacher is bound (by his nature according to the appropriation theory) to be a good model of influence and to teach how to recognise rational errors and the right value of indifferents.

However, some scholars, such as Nussbaum and Sorabji, challenge the view that the Stoic therapy of passions aligns with the social aspect of ethical appropriation since it promotes a kind of detachment.[164] On the other hand, Gill argues that this is not the case, since both accounts are based on the same ethical framework and they promote the realisation of 'a life according to nature'; their difference is that they represent different aspects of this realisation.[165]

The Didactic and Ethical Role of Poetry – Why Tragedy?

Now that we have a clearer picture of what a Stoic πάθος is and how it is formed, it is worthwhile to explore Stoic views on poetry. It may seem like Stoics should not be interested in poetry. After all, it could be claimed that poetry, and tragedy in particular, relies on falsehoods or otherwise distorts the truth; they also depict outrageous excesses of emotion, precisely what Stoics want to avoid. For example, one might fear that an audience would passively absorb false impressions presented in a play and then develop harmful emotional reactions based on fictional events and situations. This is precisely what the Stoics were trying to prevent from happening, through their therapy of passions. This section will, therefore, explore Stoic views on poetry and will explain why Stoics might find value in this literary medium despite the dangers of tragic poetry. I will begin with some brief reflections on the didactic and ethical role of tragedy in antiquity, emphasising its use as an educational tool within and beyond Stoic circles. This background will allow me to develop an argument that the Stoics adapted this pedagogical tradition for their own therapeutic purposes in accordance with their own Stoic principles.

[160] Gill 2023, pp. 212-213.
[161] Brennan 2003, pp. 265-274.
[162] Gill 2006, pp. 261-266; Graver 2007, pp. 164-167.
[163] Gill 2023, p. 219; Graver 2007, p. 154.
[164] Nussbaum 1994, pp. 364-365, 370-371, 376, 394-395, 400-401; Sorabji 2000, pp. 169, 173.
[165] Gill 2023, pp. 226-246.

The Stoic views on Poetry

Despite the fragmentary nature of our evidence for Stoic thought, it is nevertheless clear that Stoics frequently appealed to poetry and drama, often citing passages from these literary genres, including tragedy. This has been called 'the argument from the poets' and it reflected a common practice among educated Greeks more generally; poetic citation was, it has been said, deeply 'ingrained in their psyche'.[166] The reason philosophers turned to literature, specifically elegy and tragedy, was their subject matter, which was often inextricably tied to the experience of passions such as anger and grief.[167]

For example, we are told that Chrysippus copied almost the whole Euripidean tragedy *Medea* while providing an exegesis of it (Diogenes Laertius 7.180).[168] Cleanthes composed the *Hymn to Zeus*, which Seneca translated in part (Seneca, *Epistles* 107.11). Seneca notably agrees with Cleanthes that tragedy presents philosophical arguments more lucidly than prose (Seneca, *Epistles* 108.8). Epictetus examines Euripidean Medea's anger and thirst for revenge and claims they could have been prevented if she had followed a different approach in reason (Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.28.7-9; 2.17.19-22). As for Seneca himself, he did far more than critique the tragic works of others and instead penned numerous tragedies of his own.[169] It would be reasonable to think that philosophers who want to extirpate passions would not approve of means which are affective and fire up the audience. Plato famously scorned tragedy because it presented the tragic characters surrendering to their emotions, crying with tears and groans in reaction to their bad luck when they should have dealt with misfortune in a more mature and wise, 'philosophical' manner (Plato, *Republic* 605c-d). In contrast to Plato, the Stoics did not avoid or condemn the genre, but they were constantly turning to it in their philosophical discussions, and they utilised tragedy precisely because of its ability to illustrate 'a lively image' of the human passions[170] taking place within the soul. After the examination of the Stoic uses of poetry in this chapter, and the role of the audience in the next chapter, it will be clear that not only did poetry offer pleasure to its audience but it also served educational purposes and functioned as a complementary tool in the process of the Stoic therapy of passions; a medical therapy, which often causes pain and leaves the patient with a disturbing feeling to treat them and teach them a healthier way of living.

The Stoic philosophers were particularly keen to invoke tragic heroes. Chrysippus was known and often ridiculed for his use of the argument from the poets (Galen, *PHP* 3.4.15). He exploited poetry for allegorical purposes,[171] and also because it directly revealed human passions even though the human soul was not accessible

[166] Dillon 1997, p. 211.
[167] Fischer 2014, p. 8.
[168] On Chrysippus's quotations from Euripedian *Medea* and Homer's *Odyssey*, see Graver 2007, pp. 70-72, Chaumartin 2014, pp. 653-654; Star 2015, p. 247.
[169] *Medea*, Costa 1973; *Agamemnon,* Tarrant 1976; *Troades*, Fantham 1982; *Thyestes*, Tarrant 1985a; *Hercules Furens*, Fitch 1987; *Phoenissae*, Hirschberg 1989; *Phaedra*, Coffey & Mayer 1990; *Oedipus*, Tochterle 1994. See also Zwierlein 1986.
[170] Staley 2010, p. 68.
[171] Tieleman (1996, p. 221) argues that Chrysippus' mode of interpretation of poetry not only involves allegorical practices but that 'the psychic functions are associated with the heart on their literal or 'surface level'". Poetry does not offer an

(Galen, *PHP* 3.1.15); the poet, he said, offers a better way to perceive the inner world (Galen, *PHP* 4.1.7). Chrysippus quotes Menander's 'searching' for a place on the body where reason has gone so that he can show that passions can drive us away from reason (Plutarch, *Moralia* 450c). Teun Tieleman[172] has argued that the Stoics formed a dialectical theory, which applies some kind of persuasion (τό πιθανόν) in areas such as human psychology, which is supported by the fact that Chrysippus uses tragedy to find more evidence,[173] something of which Galen disapproves (Galen, *PHP* 3.8.35).

However, according to Tieleman and Staley, the Stoics justified their use of poetry in a theoretical manner closely linked with their epistemology.[174] Poetry utilised common beliefs to offer evidence and persuade the audience. Hence, poetry would prove useful for the Stoics, who would likely adduce poetry for their own purposes to present the invisible inner life of the human soul. Even Galen admitted that it was appropriate to call Homer a witness to what appears vividly to the senses (φαινόμενον ἐναργῶς) or to something which resembles a sense impression, such as the emotions of the soul (EK fr. 156). However, Galen also thought Chrysippus cited poetry when it did not give sufficient evidence, which could replace logic and argumentation.[175] However, Tieleman supports that Chrysippus deemed poetry to be a manifestation or a presentation of his argumentation on passions and the soul.[176]

Paul Veyne has argued somewhat differently[177] that Chrysippus was attracted to poetry because it reflects everything as it expresses the true nature of things. He also parallels poetry with an 'involuntary and truthful mirror'. Seneca makes the same conscious connection because poetry brings us 'face to face with the reality' (Seneca, *De Ira* 2.36.1). Staley has therefore rightfully emphasized that Seneca treated tragedy as a mirror, which reflected the human soul, exactly like Chrysippus did.[178] Seneca claims that even the angry man who stands in front of the mirror to observe the spectacle of anger on him is already a changed man (Seneca, *De Ira*, 2.36.3).

Most importantly, tragedy depicts how humans create passions because they choose to admire external things. In his *Discourses*, Epictetus[179] writes on progress in the fourth section of the first book, called *Περὶ προκοπῆς* (*Of Progress*) and supports that tragedy is the depiction of the passions which people experience when they indulge their admiration and desire for external things:

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undersense (uponoia, which is an allegorical term) but a direct message on how the characters behave and feel literally. See Staley 2010, pp. 67-70.

[172] Tieleman 1996, p. 266.

[173] Staley 2010, p. 8.

[174] Tieleman 1996, p. 225; Staley 2010, p. 69, Chapter 3.

[175] See Heinrich von Staden 1995, p. 64 on Galen's appropriation of rhetorical demonstration concerning his anatomical research.

[176] Tieleman 1996, pp. 288, 290 and Staley 2010, p. 69 support a connection between Aristotle's *Rhetoric* on analysis of the role of images in the cognitive processes (judgment), the notion of πιθανόν, and the Stoics', particularly Chrysippus' dialectic and use of poetry.

[177] Veyne 1988, p. 64.

[178] Staley 2010, p. 69. See also Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 108.38-39, and the previous section on pp. 57-59 in the current thesis.

[179] I employ Epictetus's passages to support the Stoic use of poetry despite the fact that Epictetus is a later source . While his evidence is therefore not probative, I would nevertheless argue that since his work shares common ground with earlier Stoics it can help fill out the general Stoic background for Seneca's tragedies.

ἵνα δύνηται λέγειν ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ "ὦ φίλε Κρίτων, εἰ ταύτῃ τοῖς θεοῖς φίλον, ταύτῃ γινέσθω," καὶ μὴ ἐκεῖνα "τάλας ἐγώ, γέρων ἄνθρωπος, ἐπὶ ταῦτά μου τὰς πολιὰς ἐτήρησα." τίς λέγει ταῦτα; δοκεῖτε ὅτι ὑμῖν ἄδοξόν τινα ἐρῶ καὶ ταπεινόν; Πρίαμος αὐτὰ οὐ λέγει; Οἰδίπους οὐ λέγει; ἀλλ᾽ ὁπόσοι βασιλεῖς λέγουσιν; τί γάρ εἰσιν ἄλλο τραγῳδίαι ἢ ἀνθρώπων πάθη τεθαυμακότων τὰ ἐκτὸς διὰ μέτρου τοιοῦδ᾽ ἐπιδεικνύμενα;

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.24-27.

Hence, Epictetus thinks tragedies render passions, the plot played within our invisible soul, visible. All the tragic events stem from a failure of judgements according to the Stoic view[180] since passions themselves are the mistaken use of reason. However, this is not something easily shown as their vehemence is likely to distract the agent from the rational mechanism with which they function. Poetry and rhetoric come to the rescue since they can solve this problem; Seneca actualises the theoretical moral concept by writing his own tragedies, drawing upon the Greek plots and presenting them in a Stoic light.[181] His tragedies reify the passions of the tragic characters. The latter develop their emotions on stage, presenting every step to which they subject themselves to the audience's watching and observing the procedure. Indeed, Seneca desires an act of e*xtispicium*, he wants to show the soul naked because, under the affective influence of vice, the distorted appearance of the soul would upset and shake the viewer:

Animus si ostendi et si in ulla materia perlucere posset, intuentis nos confunderet ater maculosusque et aestuans et distortus et tumidus. Nunc quoque tanta deformitas eius est per ossa carnesque et tot impedimenta effluentis; quid si nudus ostenderetur?

Seneca, *De Ira* 2.36.2.

Seneca is not worried about a negative result on the soul of the viewer. He seems to desire to discover a way to demonstrate the soul under the influence of passions. The fright in front of the spectacle of anger is very likely to happen (πιθανόν). Staley emphasises that the exploration of the inner world of tragic characters is worthy only due to its cognitive value since Seneca's desire to 'show' the human soul 'naked' is the very soul of his tragedies, their 'autobiography'.[182]

This sort of vicarious emotional experience is desirable if the viewer is later in a position to understand the true value of things. A tragic play would be the perfect playground to safely exercise the ability to judge wisely and attribute the right value to the externals. Epictetus remarks:

[180] Staley 2010, p. 66.
[181] The notorious debate on whether Seneca's tragedies adhere to Stoicism will be analysed in the second chapter of the current thesis. See also Dingel 1974, pp. 11-14; Rosenmeyer 1989, pp. 3-11; Ker 2009, pp. 128-129.
[182] Staley 2010, p. 67. On a view of the penetration of the tragic heroes' inner world as Seneca's autobiography, see Segal 1983, p. 249.

εἰ γὰρ ἐξαπατηθέντα τινὰ ἔδει μαθεῖν, ὅτι τῶν ἐκτὸς καὶ ἀπροαιρέτων οὐδέν ἐστι πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν ἤθελον τὴν ἀπάτην ταύτην, ἐξ ἧς ἤμελλον εὐρόως καὶ ἀταράχως βιώσεσθαι, ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ὄψεσθ᾽ αὐτοὶ τί θέλετε.

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.26-27.

Epictetus stresses the importance of understanding nature, fate, and the true value of things; even if a form of deception could provide the above, he would consent to it since the reward would be a serene and worry-free life. The theatrical play is such a deception; it is not something false that one believes to be true; the audience knows that the tragic events happen only on stage, they are not real, and therefore, they do not give their consent to a mistaken judgment (the proposition that what happens on stage is real). The entire tragic plot and action are occasioned by a cognitive mistake (ἁμάρτημα), the correction of which can be didactic and cathartic. Furthermore, Epictetus, when discussing Chrysippus' books, adds:

Τί οὖν ἡμῖν παρέχει Χρύσιππος; "ἵνα γνῷς," φησίν, "ὅτι οὐ ψευδῆ ταῦτά ἐστιν, ἐξ ὧν ἡ εὖροιά ἐστι καὶ ἀπάθεια ἀπαντᾷ, λάβε μου τὰ βιβλία καὶ γνώσῃ ὡς ἀκολουθά τε καὶ σύμφωνά ἐστι τῇ φύσει τὰ ἀπαθῆ με ποιοῦντα."

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.28-29.

Therefore, what offers serenity and a happy life (εὖροιά)[183] and tranquillity (ἀπάθεια), cannot be something false; tragedy contributes to the prevention and extirpation of passions (as it will be shown in the analysis of Seneca's dramas later on) and, therefore, provides the audience with a Stoic ἀπάθεια. Watching theatre, then, is harmonious and in accordance with Nature since it can give the audience a moral lesson which leads to serenity. Indeed, serenity is a significant concept in the Stoic attempt to achieve progress and learn to value things properly:

Ὁ προκόπτων μεμαθηκὼς παρὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων ὅτι ἡ ὄρεξις ἀγαθῶν ἐστιν, ἡ δ᾽ ἔκκλισις πρὸς κακά, μεμαθηκὼς δὲ καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλως τὸ εὔρουν καὶ ἀπαθὲς περιγίνεται τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἢ ἐν ὀρέξει μὲν

[183] The term 'εὖροια βίου' is a Stoic phrase evident in Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus (Diog. Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Zeno Stoic. 1.46, Cleanth.126, Chrysipp.3.4; Stob. *Ecl*. 2.7.6, p. 77, 21; Sext. Emp. *Math*. XI. 80 (εὐδαιμονία δέ ἐστιν, ὡς οἵ τε περὶ τὸν Ζήνωνα καὶ Κλεάνθην καὶ Χρύσιππον ἀπέδοσαν, εὖροια βίου.) Cleanth. frag. 74, Diog. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.88; Diogenes Laertius wrote: εἶναι δ᾽ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ εὐδαίμονος ἀρετὴν καὶ εὖροιαν βίου, ὅταν πάντα πράττηται κατὰ τὴν συμφωνίαν τοῦ παρ᾽ ἑκάστῳ δαίμονος πρὸς τὴν τοῦ τῶν ὅλων διοικητοῦ βούλησιν. 'And this very thing constitutes the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe.' Diog. Laertius. 7.88); *vita secondo defluens cursue* in Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 120.11-12 (*Ex quo ergo virtutem intelleximus? Ostendit illam nobis ordo eius et decor et constantia et omnium inter se actionum concordia et magnitudo super omnia efferens sese. Hinc intellecta est illa beata vita secundo defluens cursu, arbitrii sui tota.* 'How then have we formed the conception of virtue? Virtue has been manifested to us by this man's order, propriety, steadfastness, absolute harmony of action, and a greatness of soul that rises superior to everything. Thence has been derived our conception of the happy life, which flows along with steady course, completely under its own control.' Translation drawn from Gummere 2015).

ἀποτυγχάνοντι, ἐν ἐκκλίσει δὲ μὴ περιπίπτοντι, τὴν μὲν ὄρεξιν ἧρκεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ εἰσάπαν ἢ ὑπερτέθειται, τῇ ἐκκλίσει δὲ πρὸς μόνα χρῆται τὰ προαιρετικά. τῶν γὰρ ἀπροαιρέτων ἄν τι ἐκκλίνῃ, οἶδεν ὅτι περιπεσεῖταί ποτέ τινι παρὰ τὴν ἔκκλισιν τὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ δυστυχήσει. εἰ δ᾽ ἡ ἀρετὴ ταύτην ἔχει τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν εὐδαιμονίαν ποιῆσαι καὶ ἀπάθειαν καὶ εὔροιαν, πάντως καὶ ἡ προκοπὴ ἡ πρὸς αὐτὴν πρὸς ἕκαστον τούτων ἐστὶ προκοπή. ἀεὶ γὰρ πρὸς ὃ ἂν ἡ τελειότης τινὸς καθάπαξ ἄγῃ, πρὸς αὐτὸ ἡ προκοπὴ συνεγγισμός ἐστιν.

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.1-4.

The notions "τὸ εὔρουν καὶ ἀπαθὲς" are of great importance in Stoic thought since one needs to achieve ἀπάθεια and εὐδαιμονία to reach ἀρετή and be closer to being wise.[184] However, Epictetus argues that merely pursuing what is good and avoiding what is evil due to the aversion the latter provokes does not suffice. A proper προκόπτων (he who makes progress) needs to face situations when they have to exercise their free choice (προαίρεσις) and train themselves to cope with difficult situations, maintaining their cognitive faculty uninfluenced by external things. Otherwise, the avoidance of all sorts of states of mind renders the person weak and unprepared.

The experience of situations which might lead to affective reactions can prepare one for perfection and help them make progress (προκοπή). Epictetus admits that tragedy is a playground for heroes who admire external things and attribute wrong value to them, as shown above.[185] Thus, a plausible inference is that tragedy is the best example of situations which involve emotional reactions, passions and the need for a free choice and interpretation. The aesthetic experience of watching a tragic play offers the viewer the vicarious experience of an intense situation, a simulation of passions that might arise and enough distance to process all the information (cognitive and impulsive) and train their free choice (προαίρεσις).

They can feel both the awe and the ugliness the passions might provoke without coming too close to these passions letting them swallow them. They can be shocked, frightened and even a bit charmed. However, the experience of tragedy allows them not to develop actual passions which would harm them, but only pre-passions (προπάθειαι), as Seneca claims in his *De Ira* 2.1-4. The spectators or readers might recognise certain emotional reactions and patterns of themselves which are similar to what the tragic heroes display on stage. The specific aesthetical experience offers a great opportunity to see the disastrous effect that a fixated attachment to external things might have, which, after all, might not be very far from their own emotional life, hence something likely to happen (τό πιθανόν). Therefore, tragedy can present the inner life of the soul to the audience and, at the same time, bring them a bit closer to their own inner states of mind allowing them to treat this and similar cases as a detached and compassionate doctor, a topic which will be analysed in the second chapter of the current thesis. Tragedy presents the audience with the opportunity to speculate and introspect. However, this can be done only

[184] The idea of progress in conjunction with εὔρουν καὶ ἀπαθὲς is evident also in Seneca as a desirable moral achievement. In his *Epistles* 120.11, he mentions the terms *beata vita, secundo defluens cursu*, rendering the same metaphor as Epictetus does with the term τὸ εὔρουν. Oldfather 1925, pp. 27, 16.
[185] See more on Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.4.24-27 on page 61 in the current Chapter.

if the audience is conscious and trained to function as a compassionate doctor, as tragedy can be as dangerous as beneficial since it generates emotional responses and, therefore, can negatively influence an unaware viewer or reader.

Therapy of Passions through Poetry: Chrysippus and Posidonius

Therapy of passions means freedom of passions. Chrysippus and Stoics indicated a crucial way, in which people are not free. They are "slaves of their own passions" and they are passively subjected to them. The Chrysippean runner argument is an astute example of the above claim. We should approach this theory with caution though, since lack of freedom here is not identified with the absence of autonomous actions, since even passions are 'up to us' according to Epictetus in his *Discourses*. A person suffering from her πάθη is not free not because of their social class (relating to the term ἐλεύθερος that means 'legally free').[186] It means that the individual has not yet reached the emotional and intellectual maturity to act only as she wishes, and more precisely in a manner which is in accordance with both the universal Reason and his personal belief system, which one could say is a microcosm of the universe. This is the reason why only wise people are free, and more specifically, free of passions. Hence, the Stoic therapy of passions aims at ἀπάθεια, which means that a person is in a mental state free of excessive emotions that blur her rational judgement.

Chrysippus showed that tragedy was conducive to the therapy of passions.[187] Hearing tragedy (since poetry was an auditory experience) would be equivalent to the cognitive exercise of imagining that the worst possible scenario can happen (τό πιθανόν).[188] Through the experience of tragedy, the spectators would be prepared for the misfortunes of life, and they would not be overwhelmed by the sudden nature of an unfortunate event, which has been argued to aggravate the affective reaction to the impression. Also, tragedy depicts the chaos and the pain that the wrong use of judgment can provoke, so that the audience can use that as an example to avoid. More importantly, Chrysippus teaches the audience to treat the tragic character as the doctor treats her patient.[189] They can analyse the reasoning of passions and be prepared not to make the same mistakes they see in the tragic plots. Medea would not be miserable if she had exercised her judgment and acquired the knowledge that her husband's betrayal was not bad or good for her. The tragic heroes and events are appearances which the spectator is called to examine carefully and find the truth among the myths. Tragedy induces emotional responses in the audience only when it identifies with the tragic persona, sympathises with her and believes that the appearance that something evil has happened is true. Detachment from this erroneous reasoning is necessary to be a vigilant Stoic viewer. Unfortunately, Chrysippus does not motivate his audience to avoid a passive, impressionable hearing of the tragedy. He seems to forget that not every spectator is aware of the Stoic practices

[186] Graver 2007, p. 81.
[187] Nussbaum 1993, p. 128.
[188] For an interesting parallel on *praemeditatio malorum* practices of Chrysippus, see Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.29-84, especially 3.52, 3.59-63, 3.79.
[189] Nussbaum 1993, p. 143.

and many of them lack the capacity for critical judgment; as opposed to Seneca's audience, who, I will argue, can be a fine example of reformed viewers.

Chrysippus against Posidonius on poetry and education

It is well-known that the Stoics employed allegory to serve their educational purposes. However, there are important differences within Stoa; Chrysippus's and Posidonius's views on poetry and its educational effect are of particular interest in that their different psychological models result in different analyses of tragic characters. Chrysippus's approach, which likely goes back to Zeno, seems to have been the mainline position, followed by Epictetus and, as I shall argue, Seneca. Posidonius, however, espoused a 'platonic' tripartite division of the soul perceived as he thought to be true. Martha Nussbaum argues that we can find some evidence of this view earlier in the work of Diogenes of Babylon[190] as well.

Although both Chrysippus and Posidonius choose to employ art to cure the soul, they cannot agree on the manner this goal will be achieved because they have very different views on the nature of the passions and the structure of the soul. As a result, the poetic education and the role of poetry in the therapy of passions suggested by the two philosophers cannot follow the same methodology[191] since the one argues in favour of a modification of the irrational passions through non-rational means whereas the other hopes to alter the passions treating them as judgments rationally formed. Although there is a possibility that Posidonius had adopted this view (Galen, *PHP* 5.5.32-35), various scholars, and especially Margaret Graver, warn us that we always need to keep in mind that perhaps the difference between Posidonius and Chrysippus is preserved and overstated by Galen,[192] who being a Platonist himself, opposed to Stoicism and Chrysippus in particular. Hence, there is a great possibility that Galen misinterpreted Posidonius's objections. Indeed, Posidonius talks about κινήσεις τινὰς ἑτέρων δυνάμεων ἀλόγων (certain movements of other irrational powers, Galen, *PHP* 5.1.4-5), not about separate parts of the soul. On the other hand, Posidonius seems to explicitly say that passions cannot be cured by rational means since they lack a rational nature. Thus, even if Galen exaggerated when he described Posidonius's stance, it is evident that there were significant differences between Posidonius and Chrysippus. The former believed that passions were evaluative judgments. Hence, the textual part of poetry would induce a rational change that would prevent the formation of the passion. On the other hand, Posidonius deemed passions to be παθητικαί κινήσεις, irrational movements, which need to be modified by non-cognitive means since they are non-rational (EK ı68 = *PHP* v.6, 330 D). Hence, he focused on the training of irrational passions through wordless melodies.

In *PHP* 4.5.24–46, Galen documents Posidonius's extensive exploitation of poetry to show that Chrysippus's theory on passions and claims that the latter, except for the erroneous propositional mistakes in assigning value to externals, needs a further underlying reason to explain why passions occur. Posidonius

[190] Nussbaum 1993, pp 115-121.
[191] Nussbaum 1993, p. 101.
[192] Graver 2007; Tieleman 2003, pp. 220-230; Gill 2006, pp. 287-289.

mentions Homer's Agamemnon consumed with grief (*Iliad* 10.17-20 and 10.91-95) to show the inconsistency between Agamemnon's reason, passions and actions (Galen, *PHP* 4.5.35-39).[193] He also states that Agamemnon's reason and better judgment stipulated a different course of action in comparison to his emotion, but he nevertheless acted upon his passion (Galen, *PHP* 4.5.40).[194] He justifies his criticism of Chrysippus based on the example he just drew from the *Iliad* mentioning that other people reject reason whereas others welcome it and that Chrysippus has not stated the cause of the passion as a whole (Galen, *PHP* 4.5.41).[195] Posidonius claims then that Chrysippus needs a more solid account of passions since his cognitivism lacks an underlying condition which would explain the nature and development of passions more fully.[196] There are more instances when Posidonius cites poetry to prove his points, such as in *PHP* 4.7.6-9[197] where he quotes Euripides (and Anaxagoras) on the beneficial use of προενδήμειν (or *praemeditatio malorum* in Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.29). Furthermore, Galen, in attacking Chrysippus, adds that Posidonius's belief that passions arise because of "spirit and appetite" and that their force ceases in time even if the judgments and beliefs that feed them persist (Galen, *PHP* 4.7.25).[198] Galen also states that Posidonius makes use of Chrysippus employment of poetry (Homer, *Odyssey* 4.541; *Iliad* 24.514) in his book 2 of his *On Passions* against the latter's own argument. According to Galen, Chrysippus quotes poetry in his passage because he wants to show that when the affective intensity ceases, there is room for reason to become stronger and bring the mind back to its senses (Galen, *PHP* 4.7.27-28). However, he concludes that his assumptions are contradictory (Galen, *PHP* 4.7.29). Later on, Galen presents Posidonius as distinct from Chrysippus in that the cessation of the passions is caused by powers, such as pleasure due to the possession of a desired object, observed in other animals (Galen, *PHP* 4.7.33-35). This last difference is important because their disagreement on what makes a passion stop leads to a different therapeutic approach in the therapy of passions, the purpose of which is to eliminate or pre-empt the passions. Later on, in the same section of *PHP* (Galen, *PHP* 4.7.36-38), Posidonius is again quoted on his disagreement. He says that passionate movements press so hard that the human agent cannot control them or stop their emotional reaction (e.g. crying). However, although both are referring to emotional reactions, they are talking about different stages of the emotional procedure; Chrysippus is referring to the προπάθειαι, the involuntary preliminary movements which precede the passion, whereas Posidonius treats those as the passions themselves, perceiving them to be completely irrational.

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[193] Translation was drawn from Lacy 1981, pp. 264–270.
[194] 'If Agamemnon is standing there, taking advice though his heart is trembling thus, then people suffering from passions who think that it is not appropriate in view of what has happened to refuse to listen to reason are indeed being moved in accordance with their passions'. (Galen, *PHP* 4.5.40, Translation drawn from Lacy 1981, pp. 264–270).
[195] Translation drawn from Lacy 1981, pp. 264–270.
[196] Inwood 2022, p. 139. See also Galen, *PHP* 4.5.42.
[197] See Lacy 1981, pp. 194-203, passages 280.19–290.22.
[198] Galen, *PHP* 4.7.1–39: translation drawn by Lacy 1981, pp. 194-203, passages 280.19–290.22: In the case of grief there are some people who seem to give it up, as though sated. Homer also says this about Achilles, who was grieving for Patroclus: / But when he had his fill of crying and rolling around / And the desire for it left his mind and his limbs / he proceeded to console Priam by showing him the irrationality of his grief.

Therefore, the approaches to the therapy of passions and a moral education which the two philosophers followed are utterly different. Posidonius, who was influenced by Plato's philosophical and educational system as Galen maintains, promotes the training of pre-rational children. Seneca cites Posidonius's view:

> *Posidonius non tantum praeceptionem, nihil enim nos hoc verbo uti prohibet, sed etiam suasionem et consolationem et exhortationem necessariam iudicat. His adicit causarum inquisitionem, aetiologian quam quare nos dicere non audeamus, cum grammatici, custodes Latini sermonis, suo iure ita appellent, non video. Ait utilem futuram et descriptionem cuiusque virtutis; hanc Posidonius ethologian vocat, quidam characterismon appellant, signa cuiusque virtutis ac vitii et notas reddentem, quibus inter se similia discriminentur.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 95.65-66.

An implementation of the theory, meaning the psychological portrayal of the tragic characters – in this case Medea- would be of great assistance in the two theories' corroboration and comparison. Euripides' *Medea,* especially verses 1078-1080, drew the philosophers' attention in particular. In these lines, Medea explains that she has knowledge of the evil she is about to do, but her passion, which is the greatest cause of unhappiness and sorrow, has taken control. Chrysippus pays attention to the verses mentioned in his *On the Passions* and (probably) *On the Soul* (Galen, *PHP* 3.3.16, 4.6.19). As Galen informs us, Chrysippus exploits Medea's famous monologue to explain his monistic philosophical system.[199] Medea is struggling between the rational thought that the murder of her children is evil and wrong and the increasing anger that 'commands' her to take revenge. More specifically, Medea acknowledges that killing her offspring is evil but something else, her passion, her anger, holds the best of her:[200]

> Και μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά,
> Θυμός δε κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων,
> ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς.
>
> Euripides, *Medea*, 1079-1080.

Posidonius interprets Medea's conflict in Platonic terms and claims that it is a struggle between reason (λογισμός) and anger (θυμός). Galen's claims (Galen, *PHP* 3.3.17, 307K) are based on Plato's tripartite psyche theory and the charioteer-horses analogy in *Phaedrus* (Plato, *Republic*, 435e; Plato, *Phaedrus* 253d f). Medea's anger dominated her soul and defeated reason. Her acknowledgement that her potential deed is bad proves, in his eyes, that irrational anger has ruled Medea's psyche, and that she has no other choice but to passively obey her passion. Bruno Snell seems to agree with Galen's interpretation and

[199] See *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*; *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, in De Lacy 1978; 1981; 1980.
[200] Kovacs 198, p. 382.

claims that Medea's anger is stronger than her reasonable intentions.[201] On the other hand, Bernard Knox claims that Medea is not helpless in this inner conflict.[202] On the contrary, she is the only person that can cease her fierce plans. Her self as a whole is involved in this dispute while she changes her mind over and over again. A dispute between two elements in her psyche, the sentiments of her 'maternal feelings and the 'grim heroic resolve', that is the killing of her children, which 'must die.' Medea is aware of both her sentiments and her action is up to her. She acts as one whole person which is dominated by her passion.[203]

Knox's interpretation reminds us of the Chrysippean theory.[204] Indeed, Medea's struggle does not occur between reason and passion with the latter being an irrational movement. On the contrary, as Medea continuously changes her mind, she is torn between the right reason and an error of her judgment (ἀμάρτημα, Galen, 4.2.19-27, 370-72K). Hence, there is a rational element in her anger. Indeed, if we remember Graver's pathetic syllogism, it is easy to apply it to Medea's reasoning; Medea, as a person, believes that betrayal of the sacred bonds of friendship (φιλία) is something bad and insulting. She also accepts the impression that a break of this bond between her and Jason has occurred, hence she thinks it is appropriate and rightful to seek revenge. Because of this reasoning, her anger is born. It might be evil, callous and utterly wrong but it is also a product of reasoning. Hence, Galen's and possibly Posidonius's theory cannot be right since there is a rational explanation for Medea's passion.

Gill points out that the differences between the views of Snell and Knox lead to radically different readings of Medea's monologue. He rather maintains that the action of infanticide is an 'exemplary gesture' as he names it, which is based on a 'second-order reasoning' about the nature of human life.[205] There is an underlying ethical stance behind Medea's killing, the recognition of and engagement with which explains the audience's sympathetic involvement despite the horrendous nature of her actions.[206] Therefore, the exemplary gesture reflects on an ethical stance about the way one lives a human life, meaning that the sacred bond of φιλία is not to be broken. Gill then is in contrast with Snell's position, who sees Medea's monologue as an example of a conflict within Medea's self who is a 'self-conscious I'.[207] Snell's reading is based on the contrast between "moral reason" and non-moral passion", where the only motive in Medea is passion.[208]

The passion seen as judgment though does not change the fact that Medea indulged in it and, as a consequence, killed her children to punish Jason. She thought about her suffering and her rational option not to seek revenge, but this was not enough to stop her from committing the horrifying crime. This seemingly justifies the Posidonian view since there is admittedly some kind of irrationality in the πάθος but it occurs only after the passion takes full control of the mind after the assent to ill-judged values. Chrysippus seemed to have thought about the passive stance of the individual under the power of passion and formed the analogy of the running

[201] Snell 1964, p. 52.
[202] Knox 1979, pp. 299-300.
[203] Gill 1983, p. 138.
[204] Gill 1983, p. 139.
[205] Gill 1996, pp. 168, 173 n 263.
[206] Gill 1996, pp. 172-173.
[207] Gill 1996, p. 216.
[208] Snell 1964, pp. 56, 47-55.

body to explain this state; the decision to run stems from rational reasoning, which the agent fully controls. Once the running body develops its own momentum though, the running legs cannot obey so easily to the deliberate decision of the mind to stop the movement (4.2.16 369K.; *PHP*. 4.2.1-18). Similarly, passion is created through a rational thought process but after it has been approved by the mind, it takes over. This irrationality is exactly the refusal of the self to obey reason and the latter's rejection (4.2.12 368K). Hence, even if the human agency recognises the irrationality of her actions, she cannot stop her affective impulse, the passion. Thus, the aftermath of Medea's inner conflict does not indicate the defeat of reason to passion as an irrational entity, but reason's rejection by Medea herself. She internalised and accepted a cognitive disposition which was very hard to overcome in the moment; however, she is ultimately responsible for her actions since she could have rejected the wrong judgments and rethought her values when she had the chance. On the contrary, Medea chose her anger over the reasonable choice. According to Knox, she had the option to be a Medea who seeks an act of heroic revenge or a Medea who cares for her children and whose maternal instincts would never allow her to harm them. In short, she had to choose between two potential selves, two versions of Medea.

In the famous monologue in Euripidean Medea which held the Stoic attention, Medea reinforced herself to commit the crime of infanticide despite the recognition that an action such as this is immoral. What makes her acknowledge the foulness of her motives is her nature in which are instilled some uncorrupted starting principles of virtue (as in all human beings, D.L. 7.89; Stob. 5b8, LS 61 L), which exist even in a character as tormented and disrupted as Medea. This feature is what gives hope and encourage people to seek therapy of their passions and moral improvement. Gill recognises the value of appropriation as a means of therapy of emotions and claims that Medea is still capable to respond to therapy (Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.76-77).[209] However, the in-built preconceptions of virtue in Medea failed to develop due to her inner instability and conflict, on which corruption is based whereas ethical development is based on harmony, internal structure and cohesion in the man as a psychological unity (Sen. *Epistles* 120. 10-11, 19-21; LS 61 A, F, M).

Medea's recognition of the nature of her actions and reasoning proved useful to Stoic philosophers such as Chrysippus and Epictetus, and Seneca.[210] Gill maintains that the internal disorder in Medea was caused because of the conflict between her anger, coming from her desire to wreak revenge on Jason, and her motive to protect her children stemming from her underlying disposition of parental love, a point evident in all three Stoic works.[211] Epictetus says that Medea deemed it more beneficial (συμφερότερον) to take revenge than take care of her offspring (Epictetus, *Diss*. 1.28.7). Seneca, in his own homonymous tragedy, presents Medea as governed by a malevolent nature, in which, however, there are shards of her in-built motive of parental love, which is, nevertheless, too weak to stop her madness and, consequently, her infanticide (LS 61 L),[212] a topic which is to further analysed in the fourth chapter. The basic motive of parental love, then, is considered to be

[209] Gill 2023, 224; 2010a, 291-293.
[210] For Chrysippus' therapy and Medea, see Tieleman 2003, pp. 170-178, 326. For Epictetus, *Diss*. 1.28.7-10, see Long 1996, pp. 277-280; 2002, pp. 255-256. See also, Gill 2023, p. 231.
[211] Gill 2023, p. 231.
[212] Gill 1987, 2006: pp. 424-5, 428-9, 430-2, 433-5. See Seneca, *Medea* 926-957 on her internal conflict, and 958-977 on her madness and crime of infanticide.

retained in Medea throughout her whole life regardless of her ethically corrupted nature.[213] Epictetus places Medea onto the Stoic therapy's couch and considers that he could react to help her[214] not by getting angry but instead by pointing out the cognitive mistakes in her evaluative impressions and her judgement about what she thought as beneficial and important since there lies the seed for passions and ill actions (reference from Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.28.8-9).[215]

Therefore, the analysis above indicates that Chrysippus' cognitive view of the soul and the passions renders a Stoic reading of Medea plausible exactly because of the rational nature of passions. The non-cognitive view cannot be confirmed as it would not be able to offer a satisfying explanation of the reasons Medea acted in the way she did. Furthermore, the rationality attributed to passions renders the chasm and the differences between Chrysippean and Posidonian theories discontinuous and unbridgeable contrary to Graver's (among others') argumentation.

The goal of the current section is to show that importance of the use of Medea's tragic character in Stoic thought was due to her recognition of the bad reasoning and the immorality of Medea's actions. What makes Medea an ideal poetic example of a character most suitable to be subjected to the Stoic therapy of passions is the manifestation of her basic motives and her recognition of them instilled in her because of the concept of appropriation. As seen earlier in the same chapter, appropriation aims at oneself and constitution on the one hand, and at other people of one's kind, hence, mainly care for oneself and for one's offspring. Medea's ethical corruption intensified by the intensity of her passions interrupted her ethical development, the baseness of which was known to Medea but she did not act according to nature and therefore was led to disaster.

[213] See also, Gill 2023, text to nn 38-39, 231-232.
[214] For the response to wrongdoing, see Long 1996, pp. 277-280, 2002, pp. 76-77.
[215] See Epict. *Diss*. 1.11.5-15 on what is natural (φιλοστοργία), meaning what expresses love of kin. See also Long 2002, pp. 77-79.

Chapter 2 – A Stoic Reading of Senecan Tragedy: A Defence

Introduction

The previous chapter established that Seneca's dramatic compositions can and should be seen not as idiosyncratic compositions but as contributions to ongoing Stoic engagement with poetry for pedagogical and therapeutic purposes. The Stoics aimed to stimulate others into thinking more critically about their lives, emotions, and values by showing them a world overwhelmed by the disastrous consequences of passions running amok. The focus of this first part of this chapter is on two topics of great importance which were only alluded to in the previous chapter: the compatibility of Seneca's drama and his Stoic principles; and the intended audience or readership of Seneca's dramas. Discussion of this topic will lay the groundwork for a more thematic discussion of the various literary methods Seneca exploited to influence and shape the reactions of his audience and what goals these devices aimed to achieve. Concerning Seneca's methods and aims, I will also argue that the dramatic portrayal of passions and the emotional reactions they might cause in the audience are not in conflict with Stoic ethics and moral psychology, as some scholars have suggested. On the contrary, I will claim that the audience is vicariously exposed to the catastrophic consequences of passions and is enabled to observe the process in which these irrational reactions are formed. The audience, then, has the time and distance needed to process and condemn the cognitive judgements which lead to passions and value what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong. They also have the chance to feel the tension of passions at the end of the plays or even as the plot unravels due to the poetic eloquence and rhetorical devices Seneca uses. Hence, the audience is triggered both cognitively and pre-emotionally towards crucial elements of Stoic ethics: the rational processing of one's judgements in a way which is in accordance with nature, the bettering of oneself, and the constant effort necessary to avoid forming passions and thus letting one's soul be poisoned by vice in everyday life. Furthermore, the last section of the chapter aims at showcasing how Seneca made use of the literary conversion of the chorus as a philosophical tool to guide the audience toward both active participation in the events of the play as well as to direct them to the correct responses to their aesthetic experience.

There is a long-dated debate on whether Seneca's plays are compatible with his philosophical prose. Although there is a clear moral and didactic function in Seneca's prose (*Epistles* 6.5, 8.5, 89, 94)[216], the tragedies raise a vexing issue. The main obstacle to Stoic interpretations of the tragedies is the triumph of vice and the seeming lack of a moral message. In *Thyestes*, Atreus's evil plan succeeds and in *Medea*, the heroine succumbs to madness for no good reason other than their passions and their desires. How is possible for Stoicism to cohere with the irrationally *loud* passions when ἀπάθεια, lack of passions, the excessive emotional reactions to external stimuli, is the chief requisite for Stoic ευδαιμονία? Can there be any pedagogical dimension in the tragedies despite their emotional nature? The current chapter will further refine the pedagogical and educative function

[216] See also Yun Lee Too 1994, pp. 211-224; Edwards 1997, pp. 23-38; Schafer 2011, pp. 32-52.

of the plays, which emerges through the emotional development of the characters. The moral message in the plays is enhanced by the particularly intense and emotional character of the tragedies, which stipulate the absolute need to take care of one's passions and cure them before it is too late. The educative role of pre-passions is examined along with the function of ethical development in humans. Both two factors act in concert so that they can be of use to the audience to interpret the play under an investigating eye, which they will achieve with the aid of the choruses, who is the voice of Seneca the *philosophus.*

Anti-Stoic Readings of the Tragedies

An older approach to Seneca's plays supports that there are two writers called Seneca, the *tragicus* and the *philosophus*, who are unrelated to each other.[217] This view is now obsolete, and most scholars accept that Seneca wrote both the prose and the plays. However, the scholarly views vary as many classicists believe that the plays are inconsistent with Seneca's Stoicism. Fantham, who supports that the tragedy was meant for recitational purposes,[218] believes that Senecan philosophy and poetry cannot be harmonized and that even if there are moralising characters in the plays, such as Agamemnon in *Troades*, the plays are independent of Seneca's philosophical prose and serve primarily aesthetic purposes.[219] She claims that 'the wise and mature thinker who would compose philosophical treatises would surely have no use for tragedy'.[220] However, the reason why tragedy is denounced as being unworthy of the attention of a serious moral philosopher is not clear. On the contrary, the Aristotelian definition of tragedy[221] informs its audience that tragedy is a μίμησις of an action which is elevated (μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449b24), and therefore, indicates ethical distinction;[222] we have also seen in the last chapter ample evidence of pedagogical uses of tragedy in other authors. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that Fantham based her anti-Stoic reading of the tragedies in part on her rejection of Marti's attempt[223] to offer 'a systematic demonstration of Seneca's moral teaching'.[224] Marti's effort to outline a reading of a coherent, systematic moral program in the Senecan plays is, it should be noted, tied quite closely to various further arguments regarding the authenticity of the plays (e.g. *Oetaeus*)[225] as well as their chronology. Even if Marti's readings and assumptions about these varied related matters are rejected, this does not warrant rejecting the possibility of a coherent reading of Senecan drama. Furthermore, Fantham juxtaposes Stoicism and tragedy by saying that a good Stoic does not have hope or fear, whereas a good tragedy

[217] Mayer 1994; Ker 2006, pp. 19-41.
[218] Fantham 1982, pp. 293-294.
[219] Fantham 1982, pp. 17-18, 23.
[220] Fantham 1982, p. 15.
[221] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6.1449b.23-29: ἔστιν οὖν τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ χωρὶς ἑκάστῳ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας, δι᾽ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν.
[222] See Halliwell 1995 (Loeb's edition), p. 47, n 56.
[223] Marti 1945, pp. 216-245.
[224] Fantham 1982, p. 16.
[225] Marti 1949, pp. 189-210. On criticism of Marti's paper, see Pratt 1948, pp. 1-11.

is meant to provoke hope and fear.[226] Based on his *Troades*, she also claims 'Seneca writes to stir pity, fear, revulsion, and indignation; two of these emotions were the recognized response of classical tragedy, but revulsion and indignation are perhaps peculiarly his own', and she concludes that 'the plays impress through their evocation of characters beyond restraint, and through their power to seize the attention and emotions of their public.'[227] Therefore, she concludes that the ethical dimension and the emotional intensity of the plays are incompatible. However, in what follows, I will argue that Seneca does not stir actual passions in the audience but rather only the perception of the passions, a 'what it would feel like' sensation aimed to draw their attention to passion's destructive consequences. Last but not least, if revulsion and indignation are 'peculiarly' Seneca's additions as desired responses, then the educative function of the tragedies is only enhanced since disgust for the heinous actions caused by passions would scare away and prevent the audience from mimicking them. Also, indignation in the sense of moral offence or resentment would make them think of the causes that led to strong passions such as anger and thirst for revenge, which again would make the audience feel emotionally and ethically involved in the tragic events looking at them with a critical eye.

Dingel is another proponent of the anti-Stoic reading view since he believes that Seneca follows Plato in that poetry is antithetical to philosophy and that philosophical rhetoric does not belong to Seneca's tragedies.[228] He supports his position based on various passages where Seneca, he says, calls poetry 'nonsense' which has the sole purpose of pleasing (*Istae vero ineptiae poetis relinquantur, quibus aures oblectare propositum est et dulcem fabulam nectere, De Beneficiis* 1.4.5). Dingel infers that Seneca does not think highly of poetry because he frequently uses the word '*ineptiae'* to characterise poetry.[229] However, Staley offers a strong response to Dingel by suggesting that in *Epistles* 49.5, Seneca's use of *ineptiae* and *ludere* as sources of pleasure (*oblectare*) shows his disapproval of the Roman programmatic use of *ineptiae* to characterise specific genres of poetry, such as lyric, instead of poetry in whole.[230]

Furthermore, Dinter reconciles Seneca's rhetorical device of *sententiae* and his tragedy, which brings his philosophy and poetry together, and bridges Seneca *tragicus* with Seneca *philosophus*.[231] Dinter thus responds to scholars who see Seneca as a rhetorician instead of a poet, such as Friedrich Leo,[232] through investigations of the *sententiae* that touch upon death, tyranny, and virtues.[233] However, Dinter nevertheless is reluctant to fully embrace a coherent didactic reading of the plays, and he juxtaposes anti-Stoic views of the tragedies as obstacles to a Stoic reading.[234] His focus lies on the relation between Seneca's tragedy and his moral use of *sententiae*, which happens to allow an association between tragedy and his philosophical prose. However, Dinter's work leans towards a pro-Stoic reading of the plays, but only circumstantially. Furthermore, Pare-Rey

[226] Fantham 1982, p. 18.
[227] Fantham 1982, p. 18. See also fn 11 where Fantham gives the exact verses in *Troades*.
[228] Dingel 1974, p. 65: 'Der Dichter Seneca ignoriert die Kritik des Philosophen Seneca.'
[229] Dingel 1974, p. 27: 'Dabei ist ineptiae der Begriff, unter dem sich Senecas ganze Dichterkritik subsumieren lieβe.'
[230] Staley 2010, p. 47.
[231] Dinter 2014, pp. 319-342, esp. pp. 334-335 and fn 37.
[232] Leo 1878, p. 158.
[233] Dinter 2014, pp. 329-331 (on death), pp. 331-333 (on tyranny), pp. 333-338 (on virtues).
[234] Dinter 2014, p. 335, fn 37.

is also of the opinion that Seneca's *sententiae* are in harmony with his Stoicism and through those, he provides various messages for a diverse audience.[235] The use of *sententiae* transfuse the plays with eloquence rendering it aesthetically pleasant while making a direct philosophical 'point' which 'pierces' the audience's mind.[236]

Pro–Stoic Readings of the Tragedies

The thesis has and will continue to argue for a consistent didactic reading of Senecan drama which is in complete harmony with his Stoic philosophy, and more specifically the mainstream doctrines of Chrysippus. In this chapter, this didactic aim will be supported through analysis of the plays alongside the *Epistles* and *De Ira*, which explore the didactic use of the Stoic pre-passions during the aesthetic experience of attending Senecan tragedy and their role in one's moral development. Later on, necessary details such as the audience and the role of the audience need to be clarified to show how the above premises are realised in practice. However, before the pedagogical amalgamation of Seneca's philosophy and poetry, it is important to consider some of the various pro-Stoicism views scholars have advanced.

Contrary to the Anti-Stoic readers of the plays, more and more scholars see a moral overlook both in the philosophical prose and in the plays of Seneca.[237] Some of them, such as T. G. Rosenmeyer, emphasize a cosmological aspect which points to Stoic physics and indicates nature being reactive to moral evil.[238] Rosenmeyer's work on the reconciliation of Senecan philosophy and tragedy has been influential in the turn away from more sceptical readings. He comments on the relation of man to fate, and that tragedy shows a universe where, nevertheless, man has the power to his fate through volition; however, if the universe is diseased, the course of events takes an ugly turn.[239] However, while Rosenmeyer's argument focuses on the presence of Stoic physics in the tragedies, it does not explain its ethical dimension.[240] In the following chapter of this thesis, I will argue that the physical manifestation of passions occurs in accordance with Stoic physics, thereby building on Rosenmeyer's work by showing that Stoic physics can explain its ethics after all.[241]

Many scholars deny the plays to be Stoic because they claim that the strong impression of chaos pervading Seneca's drama is not compatible with the Stoic universe, which is governed by an ordered divine providence.[242] Cedric A. J. Littlewood, for example, suggests that the literary make-up of the tragedies reminds the audience that there are laws and constructions in the tragic world.[243] However, he denies a fully Stoic reading as problematic, although he admits the root of the plays' moral rhetoric in Stoicism in terms of polarities of

[235] Paré-Rey 2012, pp. 208–242. For a review, see Wilson 2016, pp. 130-132.
[236] Wilson 2016, p. 130.
[237] Pratt 1983; Wray 2009.
[238] Rosenmeyer 1989. See also Segal 1986, 2008 (who follows a more psychoanalytical-Lacanian view).
[239] Rosenmeyer 1989, pp. 77, 90.
[240] Stevens 1992, p. 140; Nussbaum 1994, p. 449.
[241] Stevens, in his dissertation, says: '…I take issue with his grounds for dismissing the influence of Stoic ethics on the tragedies.'(Stevens 1992, p. 140).
[242] Fitch 1987, p. 41; Henry & Walker 1963, p. 109.
[243] Littlewood 2004, p. 17.

reason and passion, freedom and slavery, tyrants and their victims, life and death evident in *Troades* and in Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, which brings him to the conclusion that whether one sides with the anti-Stoic or pro-Stoic camp, the tragedies are 'informed by Stoicism'.[244] Furthermore, Littlewood adds that the "absence of a controlling order" in the tragic world reflects "Seneca's isolationist brand of Stoicism, which urges disengagement and withdrawal from an irredeemably corrupt world".[245] This interpretation, although it might find some evidence in the characters of Polyxena or Astyanax in *Troades* according to Littlewood, is ultimately unconvincing: it is not the absence of a controlling principle or order which reflects a Senecan isolationist view, but the attitude of the specific characters when faced with death; we should always be careful to distinguish a character's viewpoint and the authors'. Furthermore, Polyxena's attitude in front of death reminds us of a Stoic view of suicide, which entails a brave and rational exodus when the corrupted world has nothing to offer to be morally useful. Furthermore, lack of order or control is certainly not anti-Stoic in a world where passions govern, which is exactly the kind of universe Seneca depicts in his tragedies. The ordering and controlling power would be through an analogy to the Stoic system, the ἡγεμονικόν or διάνοια, which is the rational faculty that controls the agent's reasoning, decisions and actions in an orderly manner. The lack of order then, which is the right Reason, and the dominance of chaos, reflects the predominance of passions over right reason in the Senecan tragic world. The advantages of the latter interpretation consist of its application in all the plays of Seneca which allows for a 'straight' Stoic reading of Seneca's drama without the limitations of Littlewood's view, which, although well-thought, is unnecessarily limited to only one tragedy (*Troades*). It would also raise many questions about Hercules's attitude in front of death in *Hercules Furens*.

There is a group of scholars who turn to Aristotelian or Platonic poetics to frame Seneca's plays. For instance, Gregory Allan Staley views the plays as an exercise of Stoic epistemology, which turns into a Stoic poetics, which, however, is influenced by Aristotelian poetics.[246] Furthermore, Staley maintains that Stoicism has only an instrumental role since the tragedies do no teach through allegory and do not teach doctrinal lessons;[247] on the contrary, Staley claims that Seneca structures his drama by exemplifying an Aristotelian idea of tragedy which is seen as "a just and lively image of human nature representing its passions," as is quoted by John Dryden's *Of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) and achieves a kind of imitation and clarification, a καθάρσις.[248] He, furthermore, suggests that "Aristotle's ideas about tragedy shaped Stoic thinking about the role of images in cognition and of the emotions in persuasion."[249] However, despite the tremendous influence Aristotle had on almost every Hellenistic philosopher, Stoicism parted ways precisely on the topic of the passions, a fact which is depicted, as we will see, in Seneca's tragedies as well. Since tragedies' content demonstrates the passion in full view and their catastrophic repercussions,[250] it needs to be kept in mind that the Stoics rejected all the

[244] Littlewood 2004, 15-16.
[245] Littlewood 2004, p. 16.
[246] Staley 2010, esp. Chapter 4.
[247] Staley 2010, p. 136.
[248] Staley 2010, pp. 5, 8, 51, 66-95 (Chapter 4), p. 136.
[249] Staley 2010, p. 122.
[250] A fact with which Staley agrees since he admits that Senecan drama is riddled with 'villains swollen with passion' but however attributes their inspiration to Seneca's political life, Staley 2010, p. 124.

passions on the whole, contrary to Aristotle who thought that in moderation even anger would be of use to the agent. The destructive force of the passions is clearly illustrated in the plays, which is fully in line with Seneca's Stoicism and mainstream Stoicism more generally. If the Aristotelian influence is to prevail in the Senecan drama, it is important to refute the Stoic influence and prove it to be minor, hence to argue against the depiction of the triumph of the vice caused by the passions in the plays. In addition, Staley presents the Senecan tragedy as a metaphor for life "in which all the world was a stage".[251] He believes then that Senecan tragedy stems from Seneca's own autobiography and examples drawn from his life, and that the plays were not tools to teach philosophy although they could occasionally inspire some consideration on philosophical and poetical concerns; they would be used as a 'vehicle' to show the audience the 'madmen and fools' in Seneca's world.[252] While it may be true that a person's life must to some extent have influenced her work if only unconsciously, the influence and the resemblance of the tragic heroes to the chaotic figures of Seneca's life (e.g. Nero) does not suffice to reject out of hand a moral meaning in the plays. On the contrary, it implies Seneca's difficulty in finding ways to express himself under the repressive reign of Nero and the need to convey moral messages through different and more discreet means, such as tragedy, which, as we have seen, had long been used by Stoics and philosophers more generally.

Not only does Littlewood view a Stoic reading of the plays as problematic, but he and Alessandro Schiesaro are of the opinion that Seneca's poetics is Platonic because his poetry is a form of poetic madness, the exultation of which is sometimes praised as an aid to mental health.[253] Alessandro Schiesaro claims that, in Senecan drama, there is no room for reason and that the latter stems from a "deeply passionate realm"[254], hence, the interpretation of Seneca's poetry is unrelated to Stoicism. Schiesaro attributes Seneca's poetry to Plato's "inspired poet" due to his translation of *Phaedrus* (245a) in *De Tranquillitate Animi* 17.10, where 'the sane mind *(compos sui)* knocks in vain at the door of poetry.'[255] The poetic madness here is not antithetical to philosophy but there is common ground according to Plato of *Phaedrus* (not of the *Republic*), as both the poet and the philosopher share the magnitude of the sublime and divine madness as a source of the "greatest goods" (244a).[256] However, madness in Senecan drama is not about the sublime state in which a poet or a writer might be but, on the contrary, to the irreversible mental state of the tragic heroes which is highly destructive and not to be controlled. It is not a Platonic or an Aristotelian concept; it is the third stage of Seneca's three-fold set of steps in the passion-forming procedure, as I will show in Chapter 4.

Joachim Dingel parallels Seneca with Socrates in *Phaedrus* 248d-e in that he ranks poetry six grades below philosophy. However, Staley disagrees with the conclusion that Plato is the only source of influence as

[251] Staley 2010, pp. 10, 122. See Staley 2010, p. 124 for an interpretation of the hero *Hercules Furens* as a mad emperor, and most specifically, Nero, instead of a Stoic saint.
[252] Staley 2010, p. 51 and 136.
[253] See Staley 2010, pp. 6, 41-42 for an overview of Seneca as a Platonic poet due to his citation of Plato's *Phaedrus* 445a in his *De Tranquillitate Animi* 17.9-11.
[254] Schiesaro 1997, p. 98.
[255] Schiesaro 2003, p. 22.
[256] Staley 2010, p. 42. Dingel also comments on the passage in Dingel 1974, p. 26.

he argues that there are three voices of cited authorities, including also Aristotle and Democritus.[257] The weak spot in both Schiesaro and Staley is that the citation of authorities, being either Plato or Aristotle, does not suffice to be the main source of influence on Senecan drama. It was customary for philosophers to cite authorities who did not belong to the same school of thought—as Seneca himself cites Epicurus in the first books of the *Epistles* (*Epistles,* 1-3).[258] Furthermore, both Aristotle and Plato left behind a legacy and had a great impact on every branch of philosophy and poetics. There is a need for more concrete evidence to attribute Seneca's dramaturgy to a certain philosophical school or poetics; furthermore, if possible to prove, it would be much more likely for the tragedies to follow a Stoic poetics since Seneca adhered to Stoicism did not only cited its principles.

Both Schiesaro and Staley draw from Freudian psychoanalytical theory, and more specifically Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams,* to ground their interpretations of the plays; for example, the Virgilian Juno's actions (*Aeneid* 7.312) represent the outlet of repressed desires.[259] However, they are not in agreement with each other since Schiesaro interprets the plays as "the mad poet's dreams", whereas Staley reads them "as the analyst's interpretations,"[260] in the sense of a doctor who rationally analyses the symptoms. Schiesaro's view can, I think, be set aside by firmly emphasizing that it is not the poet's madness but the tragic heroes' extreme mental state which is shown to depict the course of the destructive passions. In the case of Staley, although he is right in tracing psychological signs in the bodily descriptions,[261] thus giving a physiognomic character to his reading, he does not pay sufficient attention to the specific role physiognomy played in Stoic ethics.[262] Furthermore, Seneca is not a psychologist in the modern sense, and his description of tragic actions does not stem from suppressed desires: the tragic characters, in fact, usually recognise and acknowledge the presence of the passions. They do not suppress their passions; on the contrary, they act upon them.

Christopher V. Trinacty, on the other hand, connects Seneca's diverse tragic characters with his *Epistles*, through the notion of the self and its self-perception.[263] However, although he admits there are several philosophical themes in the dramas, his focus lies on the fact that 'Seneca calls attention again and again to the *literary* makeup of his tragic world.'[264] Trinacty places Senecan drama within a literary Roman tradition, especially from the Augustan period, the intertextuality[265] of which helps the reader to comprehend better concepts such as 'character, plot, poetics and genre'.[266] While I happily embrace the results of his intertextual approach, this is not an either/or question—the presence of intertextuality with Augustan poetry does not

[257] Staley 2010, p. 42.
[258] More in Graver 1996 for Seneca's eclecticism, Epicurus' therapy and meditation and the consistency in Seneca's views.
[259] Freud 1900.
[260] Staley 2010, p. 8.
[261] Staley 2010, Chapter 5, pp. 96-120.
[262] On Stoic physiognomy, see more in Chapter 3 in the current thesis.
[263] Trinacty 2014, pp. 9-16, p. 234.
[264] Trinacty 2014, p. 8.
[265] On the influence of Augustan poets (mainly Virgil, Horace, and Ovid), see Littlewood 2004, pp. 259-301; Schiesaro 2003, pp. 26-31, 221-228; Hinds 1998, Putnam 1995, pp. 246-285; Tarrant 1978, p. 214; Spika 1890; Ter Haar Romeny 1887.
[266] Trinacty 2014, p. 2.

foreclose the possibility of taking Stoicism seriously or the possibility of a 'philosophical tragedy'.[267] Even his reading of the dramas vis-à-vis the *Epistles* is intended to enhance the intertextuality of the texts and the weaving of an innovative body of dramaturgy, which retains the poetic elements from his predecessors.[268] He also claims that Seneca prefers tragedy because it is in its DNA 'to be a melange of different genres' allowing for various narrative points (e.g. characters), and it also galvanises the characters to 'debate on their motivations' creating "tragic conflict" also due to the dramatic dialectic. Similarly, Rosenmeyer talks about 'poetry of oppression' where the incompatible and disagreeing parts are "forged into an overwhelming tissue of syntheses".[269] But again, none of this necessarily undercuts a philosophical reading. Indeed, the multiple narrative voices and the heroes' tragic conflicts can be seen to foster an investigating disposition in the audience, who will be vigilant to understand the course of the plot and the reasons behind it. At the same time, the chorus will guide the audience in observing the characters' points of view and mental states.

Recent studies of Seneca's didactic purpose and limitations.

The last decades have seen a resurgence of interest in Senecan studies; more and more scholars have explored didactic and pedagogical ways of reading the tragedies.[270] Stefano Maso argues that the tragedies were written within the educational context of Nero's tuition under Seneca, as was the case of Lucilius' tutelage and the *Epistles ad Lucilium*.[271] More importantly, he maintains that the tragic heroes function as *exempla* of the *proficiens*, 'the progressor' or more literally, 'personalities in *fieri*', meaning they are in the process of moral development; the heroes and anti-heroes have the opportunity and the ability to become *sapientes* or to morally fail if they are overwhelmed with passion and therefore abandon their sane reason ("perdita della ragione").[272] Furthermore, Maso suggests that Seneca follows a Posidonian account of the soul based on his *Epistles* 92.1 and 8 where the soul is divided into two parts; a rational and an irrational, a division which is framed under Platonic and Aristotelian accounts of passion.[273] However, the adaptation of Senecan passion as described is not compatible with the Stoic account of passions as described in the *De Ira* 2.2.1-2.4.2.

Martha C. Nussbaum promotes reconciliation between Seneca's prose and poetry as well; she argues that Stoics, although recognised the dangers, favoured the use of poetry as an educational means, and they confronted the dangers with the aid of four 'weapons'; censorship, writing new poetry, allegorical interpretation,

[267] Trinacty 2014, p. 8.
[268] Trinacty 2014, p.16.
[269] Rosenmeyer 1989, p. 77.
[270] Felicio 2023, p. 319.
[271] Maso 2017, p. 9.
[272] Maso 2017, pp. 25-26: 'Sullo sfondo si debbono immaginare personaggi (e dunque eroi) *in fieri*: *proficientes* che possono effettivamente diventare sapienti ma che possono anche fallire, se la passione li travolge.', and p. 27: '… il rischio tremendo cui il *proficiens* può incorrere: quello del fallimento, della perdita della ragione'.
[273] Maso 2017, p. 27: 'Una partizione di questo tipo suggerisce il tentativo di adattare la teoria stoica delle passioni al quadro platonico-aristotelico.'

and critical spectatorship.[274] She supports the didactic function of Senecan tragedy[275] due to its depiction of Stoic passion and the inner affective conflict within the tragic characters (especially Medea), and the impediment of identification with the latter because of the promotion of critical detached spectatorship, and reflection of the passions through the mimicking example of the Chorus which functions as 'a guide for the spectator's response.' She is right in that the characters repel the audience, 'making it very difficult to be 'infected' by their passions, difficult to view them as anything but diseased' and that the Chorus 'usually lacks sympathy with the principal character'.[276] However, she impugns the tragic genre as a 'reliable tool for Stoic moralizing' even handled by a capable philosopher due to the complexities the plays present and mainly because the Stoics do not believe that the poets have something to teach them removing their 'control over their own meanings, their own truths'.[277] On the contrary, despite Nussbaum's various insights and contributions to the field of the Stoic views on poetry, her argument against the effectiveness of the tragic genre as a Stoic tool lacks a solid base and, overlooks, for example, the response that while poetry as often practised may indeed be a risky business for a philosopher, this need not prevent a philosopher from trying to forge a new, better form of philosophical poetry, one where morality and rationality are enhanced by the critical eye of the philosopher who 'edits' the poem and tailors it to the philosophical and moral needs of his audience. It is not of great importance, therefore, that the poets lack control over the poems. My analysis in this thesis will, therefore, suggest that Seneca overcomes Nussbaum's criticism and carefully leads his audience away from the dangers of traditional poetry and provides them with a secure, guided theatrical environment and a model of how to approach tragic heroes.

Stoic Tragedy

Seneca's theoretical account of anger is consistent with his tragedy, which vividly illustrates the work of Stoic passions in practice. In the tragedies, if seen as 'philosophical extensions',[278] one can see the tragic heroes gradually forming their thoughts and judgments, and their passions, and slowly being transformed into beings of a distorted rationality that are driven only by their desires and fears. Although there are a variety of themes running through the dramas, the surrender of rationality to fury is the one more common. In most of Seneca's plays, rational thought gives way to passion which leads the agent to a disaster, usually the murder of a family member.

Seneca then espouses the Stoic principle that there is no good in cultivating or developing anger within our souls; this position is consistent throughout his prose and poetic works. He also chastises Accius' tragedy for conveying a harmful interpretation of anger misleading his audience. The following phrase seems to have

[274] Nussbaum 1993, pp. 100, 127-128, 130, especially pp. 131-132 (on censorship), pp. 132-133 (on writing new poetry), pp. 133-136 (on allegorical interpretation), pp. 136-145 (on critical spectatorship). Nussbaum warns that in Seneca's case, his view of poetry is more complicated (Nussbaum 1993, p. 127) but this claim does not have to mean that Seneca's view of poetry does not exist or that there is no connection between his prose and his poetry.
[275] See also Nussbaum 1991.
[276] Nussbaum 1993, p. 148.
[277] Nussbaum 1993, pp. 148-149.
[278] Harrison 2015, p. 630.

often concerned Seneca, both in prose and poetry: "Let them hate, provided that they fear" (*oderint dum metuant*, *De Ira*, Book 1, which consists of the words of Atreus in Accius's play *Atreus*. Seneca alludes to it twice in his *De Clementia* and his plays *Medea* 168, *Thyestes* 212 and *Phoenissae* 654.[279] The focus of concern here is Seneca's worry in his *De Ira*, about the admiration the words in question exert on people and the danger which leads to the impression that the given stance belongs to an important figure worthy of imitation,[280] causing awe to the audience. Hence, he concludes the first book by attacking the idea that anger and the utterances of angry men might be helpful and add to the greatness of the soul (*magnitudo animi,* 1.20.4). He claims that these words come from the savageness of ignorant and unreliable men who must be foolish to desire for others to either hate or fear them and whose words might sound great and impressive or threatening, but 'their mind is more afraid' (*De Ira*, 1.20.4-5). However, Seneca is here concerned with psychological factors: he attacks the Aristotelian notion that anger may be helpful and he offers alternative options, thus reminding the audience that the passion-fuelled characters of his tragedies ultimately fail and bring upon themselves terrible consequences.[281] This is apparent through the division of the tragedies into three main parts by Herington: 'The Cloud of Evil (usually the Prologue), the Defeat of Reason by Passion, and the Explosion of Evil (as a consequence of the defeat)'.[282]

Although there is not enough room for a proper analysis in this project, metatheatre in Seneca's plays also has an important role; Seneca views the world as a dramatic spectacle itself and he uses theatrical terms to illustrate 'Stoic progress and self-construction'.[283] There are monologues which depict the creation of the self and its perfection for Seneca's Stoic hero Cato (*De providentia* 2.9-11, *Epistles* 24.7) and Nero (*De Clementia* 1.1.2-4). Furthermore, in *On Providentia,* Seneca presents Cato's death as a performance on the 'world stage', which pleases the gods.[284] In Letter 120, Seneca defines that the goal of a Stoic is to 'play one person' (*Epistles* 120.22). This is what has been said that the majority of Seneca's characters do.[285] However, Dodson-Robinson mounts an argument for the intersubjective contamination of agency[286] and there has been a debate about the nature of Seneca's characters, which is further analysed in chapter 4; the characters either represent the dissolution of the self,[287] which is in line with the current project as it is the only way he critiques the effects of the passions and has an apotreptic function, or its creation and possible perfection.[288] Self-awareness, then, is cultivated to the same degree and via the same methods in both the philosophical and tragic works; thus, they are brought into alignment.

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[279] For more on a political approach, Caligula's use of the phrase "*oderint dum metuant*" (Suetonius, *Cal*. 30.1) and Seneca's warning to Nero condemning Atreus and Caligula's words (*De Clementia* 1.12.4, 2.2.3), see Star 2016, p. 45; Mader 1998, pp. 36-38; Schiesaro 2003, p. 161.
[280] Star 2016, p. 45.
[281] Star 2016, p. 46.
[282] Ariosto & Gottfried 1966, p. 449.
[283] Star 2016, p. 51.
[284] Star 2016, p. 51.
[285] Star 2016, p. 51.
[286] Dodson-Robinson 2010.
[287] Fitch and McElduff 2002; Gill 2006, pp. 421-35; Busch 2009.
[288] Nussbaum 1994, pp. 439-83; Bartsch 2006, pp. 255-81; Star 2012, pp. 62-83.

In Seneca's drama there are plenty of Stoic elements; for instance, the tragic characters, despite their reason's defeat by their passion, still have traces of rational thought, which is in accordance with Stoic theory; Medea, Phaedra, Clytemnestra, and Atreus, they all "think their way into their passions".[289] They rationalise their urge and finally follow their own emotions; Medea exclaims: "Anger. I follow where you lead" (*ira, qua ducis, sequor*, 953). Medea's words remind us of a reversed Stoic maxim that one should "follow nature or fate" willingly.[290] Otherwise, they would be dragged. Of course, their assent to passion is a deliberate[291] and rational action; it is just that their reason malfunctions and views as right the wrong decision due to the vehemence of the passion or the lack of philosophical training of the mind. The process of the characters' assent to passion, which is clear evidence of Stoic psychology at work, is to be further analysed and demonstrated in the last chapter of the current thesis.

The vexing issue of the reversed Stoic *sapiens* in *Thyestes* is a matter at the heart of the debate between Senecan prose and drama. Through the implementation of the gory narratives and the staging of violence, Seneca extracts from the audience the desired conclusions which would indeed be approved by the Stoics, meaning the rejection of the excessive emotions and the awareness of their danger. The plays are not means to communicate or analyse the Stoic theory per se but they present a world which functions according to the Stoic account of passion. Hence they illustrate the ideal Stoic world in reverse. The analysis below will also illuminate the reason why Seneca prefers a visual tragedy to reading to convey his philosophical teachings. Furthermore, the analysis of a character who acts as a deterrent rather than a model to mimic is important since there is a need to prove that, although not certain of the results, the plays were crafted in a way that would prevent the uneducated mind from simply copying the bad actions of the protagonists. At the end of the chapter, the examination of the chorus's role answers the latter question as the chorus comments on the heroes' actions and passions quoting Stoic maxims and actively taking a stance against vicious characters such as Medea.

It would be interesting, then, to note the difference between the two brothers, Thyestes and Atreus; Thyestes seems to act in a more Stoic manner since he is free from the burden of external goods and the lust for luxury being satisfied by his self-sufficiency and autarky. He cannot understand or control the sudden terror evident on his body on a 'happy day' when he celebrates the reunion with his brother. In great contrast, not only is Atreus able to recognise his emotions when looking at Thyestes returning, but he can also control them- a much-desired characteristic of the Stoic sage. Does this suggest that Seneca is trying to convey a different message on passions through his tragedy to the message he passes on in his *De Ira*? Is he trying to show an alternative truth about passions and the ability to control them, a theory that Stoicism would not allow?[292] Tarrant and Seidensticker have espoused the theory that Seneca illustrates Atreus as the inversion of the Stoic *sapiens*.[293] The idea of an reversed *sapiens* is agreeable to both the prose and the plays; it is a great parallel and analogy between the Stoic sage as the paragon of virtue and the ultimate devilish figure that is completely consumed by

[289] Gill 1997, p. 224; Star 2016, p. 52.
[290] Striker 1991 on the Stoic ideal of "following nature"; cf. Seneca, *On the Private Life* 5.1
[291] Star 2016, p. 52.
[292] Star 2016, p. 52.
[293] See Tarrant 1972 and Seidensticker 1969.

passion and vice. In Seneca's *Epistles* 120.4-6, the practice of analogy is praised, and Seneca claims he will put it in use (*Utar ergo illo non tantum tamquam recepto, sed tamquam usitato. Epistles* 120.4). In 120.5, he states what *analogia* is by stating the existence of mental health deduced from physical health:

> *Quae sit haec analogia, dicam. Noveramus corporis sanitatem; ex hac cogitavimus esse aliquam et animi. Noveramus vires corporis; ex his collegimus esse et animi robur.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 120.5.1-4.

However, there are faults hidden behind deeds, notions and people who are similar (such as Atreus and the Stoic *sapiens*); *Suberant illis multa vitia, quae species conspicui alicuius facti fulgorque celabat; haec dissimulavimus* ('Underneath, however, there were many faults, hidden by the appearance and the brilliancy of certain conspicuous acts; to these we shut our eyes.' *Epistles* 120.5). Later on, he continues; *Haec et eiusmodi facta imaginem nobis ostendere virtutis. Adiciam, quod mirum fortasse videatur: mala interdum speciem honesti optulere et optimum ex contrario enituit* ('These deeds and others of the same sort have revealed to us a picture of virtue. I will add something which may perhaps astonish you: evil things have sometimes offered the appearance of what is honourable, and that which is best has been manifested through its opposite. For there are, as you know, vices which are next-door to virtues.' *Epistles* 120.8). At this point, it is when people need to carefully observe in order not to be deceived by the resemblance:

> *Haec nos similitudo coegit attendere et distinguere specie quidem vicina, re autem plurimum inter se dissidentia, ac dum observamus eos, quos insignes egregium opus fecerat, adnotare, quis rem aliquam generoso animo fecisset et magno impetu, sed semel.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 120.9.

Therefore, the observance of appearance plays a very important role in discerning the true from false and the virtuous from evil. Back to the analogy at hand, Atreus, being the inversed sage, is the king of vice possessing tremendous destructive power. He has reached the level of complete indulgence to vice which leads his life, similarly to the Stoic sage who has attained ἀπάθεια and a continuously virtuous life. The analogy via the example of Atreus shows the reversed paragon of the Stoic *sapiens* who is riddled with corrupting passions, and the intensity of his power since he is as strong as the most virtuous man but in a distorted and unethical manner. This practice fits the current argument about the plays' Stoic purpose since the vehemence of such an example would scare away and disgust the audience from behaviours similar to Atreus's who let himself get carried away by his emotions. Also, it encourages an active and investigative approach to the plays on the audience's part, who need to examine and test the integrity of the characters.

Furthermore, there is more evidence which supports the technique of examples used by Seneca for philosophical purposes. In his *Epistles*, the philosopher quotes Posidonius's view on the moral education of pre-

rational children via χαρακτηρισμός (*Epistles* 95.65-66). Seneca praises the technique of illustrations and embodiment of characters:

> *Signa cuius que virtutis ac vitii et notas reddentem, quibus inter se similia discriminentur. Haec res eandem vim habet quam praecipere.*[294] *Nam qui praecipit, dicit: "illa facies, si voles temperans esse." Qui describit, ait: "temperans est, qui illa facit, qui illis abstinet." Quaeris, quid intersit? Alter praecepta virtutis dat, alter exemplar. Descriptiones has et, ut publicanorum utar verbo, iconismos ex usu esse confiteor; proponamus laudanda, invenietur imitator. Putas utile dari tibi argumenta, per quae intellegas nobilem equum, ne fallaris empturus, ne operam perdas in ignavo? Quanto hoc utilius est, excellentis animi notas nosse, quas ex alio in se transferre permittitur.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 95.65-67.

Therefore, the illustrations of characters in particular have a moral utility far greater than giving instructions on how one should behave; the relation between the two is similar to the philosophical debate between knowledge and perception. Seneca exhorts the reader to use this practice and put the examples in exhibition so that people will imitate them (*proponamus laudanda, invenietur imitator, Epistles* 95.67). Seneca's preference for embodiment to instructions has a twofold series of results; first, it resolves the question of why Seneca chooses poetry over philosophical prose to morally influence his audience. He uses the term *proponamus,* which is the first-person plural present active subjunctive form of the Latin *propono,* and it means to display, to exhibit, to set forth, to lay out.[295] The word is carefully chosen to convey a sense of a performative function. Putting an example in front of one's eyes, as an illustration, is more likely to stir their minds and move them than just giving them soulless instructions, admonitions and theoretical precepts.[296] In addition, in *Epistles* 95.69-70, Seneca enhances his view on embodiment by quoting and praising Virgil's portrayal of the brave man mentioning that he would use no other simile: *Dum aliud agit, Vergilius noster descripsit virum fortem; ego certe non aliam imaginem magno viro dederim* (*Epistles* 95.69). He goes on to illustrate the glorious and brave example of Cato (*Epistles* 95.69-73), and he also adds:

> *Proderit non tantum quales esse soleant boni viri dicere formamque eorum et lineamenta deducere, sed quales fuerint narrare et exponere.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 95.72.

Therefore, he makes explicit that a mere statement of the qualities of good men is not enough; an example is necessary, such as Cato's example against fear of death (*Epistles* 24):

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[294] In Inwood 2022, p. 148, *praecipere* is translated as 'giving instructions' which is also useful, since there is a direct distinction between giving instructions and providing an example.
[295] Charlton & Short. 1879. s.v. "prōpōnō."
[296] See also Seneca, *Epistles* 108.

> *Non in hoc exempla nunc congero, ut ingenium exerceam, sed ut te adversus id, quod maxime terribile videtur, exhorter. Facilius autem exhortabor, si ostendero non fortes tantum viros hoc momentum efflandae animae contempsisse, sed quosdam ad alia ignavos in hac re aequasse animum fortissimorum,*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 24.9.

He also associates the technique of similes with the use poetry, implementing an example himself, the one of Virgil. Therefore, it is very likely that he uses similes and χαρακτηρισμούς in his own tragedies to admonish his audience; the example of Atreus is not an exception. However, a considerable objection to the above argument would be that Seneca mentions examples of virtuous and good men; not vicious and blood-thirsty schemers like Atreus. To resolve the perplexity such an objection would cause, it would be important to keep in mind that what matters is the use of embodiment that counts, which does not exclude the illustration of negative examples. At the beginning of his commentary, Seneca mentioned that χαρακτηρισμός depicts the characteristics and the signs of virtues and vices so that one can discern one from the other, and specifically things that are alike (*signa cuius que virtutis ac vitii et notas reddentem, quibus inter se similia discriminentur. Epistles* 95.65). There is no prohibition within the text that forbids the use of negative examples for dissuasion purposes.

On the contrary, there are plenty of analogies in Senecan philosophical prose where he admits that not only does one need virtuous examples to mimic but also negative portrayals of vices to avoid. The study of character (appropriation) and one's nature benefits people and help them to find out what they should pursue and what they should avoid: *Tunc demum intelleges, quid faciendum tibi, quid vitandum sit, cum didiceris, quid naturae tuae debeas* (*Epistles* 121.3). More significant, however, are the passages in *Epistles* 120.19-22, where Seneca gives a negative example for his moral purposes. His purpose is to show that the main trait of greatness is consistency, whereas everything false does not last: *Vero tenor permanet, falsa non durant* (*Epistles* 120.19). He utters the moral message which he wants to convey through the embodiment of a man who is fool or false:

> *Maximum indicium est malae mentis fluctuatio et inter simulationem virtutum amoremque vitiorum adsidua iactatio.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 120.20.

The philosophical extensions in this message are clear: the vicious mind, meaning the mind that is flooded with passions, is unstable and unsteady; it continually changes. Also, Seneca talks about the oscillation of the mind between virtue and vice, meaning passions. Therefore, he admits to a monistic psychological system,[297] and he reveals the rational function of evil; it is the mind that swings between different dispositions. Furthermore, Seneca

[297] See more in Chapter 1.

attempts to make his reader comprehend better the nature of the fool and false man by using his embodiment; he does so by quoting Horace's poetry (*Sat*. 1.3.11–17) in *Epistle* 120.20, and he adds:

> *Homines isti tales sunt, qualem hunc describit Horatius Flaccus, numquam eundem, ne similem quidem sibi; adeo in diversum aberrat.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 120.21.

With the above words, Seneca confirms his psychological monism once again (*adeo in diversum aberrant*, *Epistles* 120.21), and he also makes an association between the use of χαρακτηρισμός and poetry. He gives an example of a poet using the method of embodiment to convey a moral message. Furthermore, he does so by implementing the embodiment technique himself illustrating a negative example of a false man as he gives more examples in *Epistles* 120.19-20 and what is worth is that his false man resembles Atreus in his *Thyestes*; at times, his false man is seemingly virtuous like Cato and Vatinius, whereas at other times he 'vies with Licinus in wealth, with Apicius in banqueting, or with Maecenas in daintiness' (*modo Licinum divitiis, Apicium cenis, Maecenatem deliciis provocant. Epistles* 120.19-20). Later on, he gives some more examples of instability (*Nemo non cotidie et consilium mutat et votum. Modo uxorem vult habere, modo amicam, modo regnare vult, modo id agit, ne quis sit officiosior servus, modo dilatat se usque ad invidiam, modo subsidit et contrahitur infra humilitatem vere iacentium, nunc pecuniam spargit, nunc rapit. Epistles* 120.21-22), and he comments: *Sic maxime coarguitur animus inprudens; alius prodit atque alius et, quo turpius nihil iudico, impar sibi est* (That is how a foolish mind is most clearly demonstrated: it shows first in this shape and then in that, and is never like itself—which is, in my opinion, the most shameful of qualities. *Epistles* 120.22).

However, how is the χαρακτηρισμός in *Epistles* 120.19-22 related to the persona of Atreus in *Thyestes*? Seneca juxtaposes the single nature of the Stoic *sapiens* and the multiple roles a fool's mind takes on:

> *Magnam rem puta unum hominem agere. Praeter sapientem autem nemo unum agit, ceteri multiformes sumus. Modo frugi tibi videbimur et graves, modo prodigi et vani. Mutamus subinde personam et contrariam ei sumimus, quam exuimus.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 120.22.

The wise man knows that it is virtuous to play one role in his life; to have constancy and consistency in his beliefs, his disposition, and his actions. There is also an element of theatricality in Seneca's demonstration and exhortation. The wise man plays one role similarly to an actor, but he is not fake; he plays and is his own self, the authentic one who is fully developed ethically and emotionally, and therefore, is in agreement with Nature and Reason. On the contrary, the false and foolish man- the one overwhelmed by his passions-'continually changes his character' and shifts masks. The description of the unsteady man is comparable to Atreus who also shifts masks and conceals his moods and intentions to achieve his callous plans. He seems capable enough to hide his passion although admits it is difficult to do so; "I can hardly control my soul, my pain hardly holds on to

the rains" (*vix tempero animo, vix dolor frenos capit*, 496). Right after, Atreus describes his emotional state and his feelings towards his brother comparing them to a hunting dog which in view of his prey, cannot wait and pounces upon the enemy dragging his master with it (*Thyestes*, 497-503). The comparison symbolises Atreus's descent into the world of beasts and the total and absolute power of passion over him. However, even when Atreus faces Thyestes – his prey- he can restrain himself and control his passion; "When anger hopes for blood it does not know how to be hidden, nevertheless, let it be hidden…let good faith be displayed" (*cum sperat ira snguinem, nescit tegi- / tamen tegatur…/ praestetur fides, Thyestes* 504-5, 507). Atreus is so corrupted that he gets out of his way to conceal himself and harm his brother. Normally, he would not be able to have hidden his passion since the physiology of passions is mentioned or depicted both in tragedies and in *De Ira*, where Seneca argues that anger cannot be hidden but drastically and radically overwhelms the agent and changes her appearance and behaviour (*De Ira* 1.1.5). However, this controversy is explained by the fact that Atreus is presented as the evil equivalent of the Stoic sage; he is powerful but he uses his might to the vice's bidding.

Furthermore, a brief comment on a relevant passage from Horace will be worthwhile.[298] Horace, we learn, does not approve of the illustration of violence on the stage:

> *Aut agitur res in scaenis aut acta refertur.*
> *segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem*
> *quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus et quae*
> *ipse sibi tradit spectator: non tamen intus*
> *digna geri promes in scaenam, multaque tolles*
> *ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praesens;*
> *ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet,*
> *aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus,*
> *aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.*
> *quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.*[299]
>
> Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 179-188.

Whereas Horace's prescriptions prevent the poets from visually showing tragic atrocities on the stage, Seneca presents Medea as 'butchering her children in public', among other extensive narratives of the violence conveyed, becoming known to the audience by witnesses or messengers. This dramatic practice was not uncommon from Ovid onwards.[300] Furthermore, it is noted that the narrations stressed focus on the body, its mistreatment and dismemberment.[301]

[298] On Seneca and Horace, see Stöckinger, Winter, and Zanker 2017.
[299] All translations of Horace's *Ars Poetica* can be drawn from Fairclough 1926.
[300] Beacham 1992.
[301] Boyle 1997, p. 134.

It has been often thought that the violence stems from the cruel cultural traditions of Seneca's era, the killing of the gladiators in the arena watched by the pleasure-seeking audience (*spectatores*), and the 'murderous games' in the arena.[302] However, as Boyle astutely notices[303], Seneca is not very fond of the effect that bloodshed has on the spectators since it makes them cruel and corrupts their morals:

> *Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus quam in aliquo spectaculo desidere. Tunc enim per voluptatem facilius vitia subrepunt. Quid me existimas dicere? Avarior redeo, ambitiosior, luxuriosior, immo vero crudelior et inhumanior, quia inter homines fui.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 7.2-3.

To the potential objection that the spectacle was righteously performed as just punishment, Seneca essentially replies that the spectators should not be punished as well for crimes they did not commit:

> *"Sed latrocinium fecit aliquis, occidit hominem." Quid ergo? Quia occidit ille, meruit ut hoc pateretur; tu quid meruisti miser, ut hoc spectes?*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 7.5.

Seneca is not trying to imitate the bloody spectacles in the arena; these only abase the human soul since the audience is free to perceive and evaluate death in all sorts of ways, often malicious ones if they take pleasure in this barbaric behaviour. Furthermore, the games lack a moral message. There is no other point in watching the games other than for the savage natures to draw pleasure from the killings. In contrast, in his plays Seneca can control the context within which violence is depicted;[304] he can move the spectators and lead them to infer certain conclusions from their 'exposure to the tragic bloodbaths'. Seneca's audience is differentiated from the audience of the gladiators' audience; the former is conscious and alert, whereas the latter is a passive audience who surrenders to their passions and take pleasure in brutal spectacles without extracting any moral lesson from it. They evaluate death and violence in a completely different manner; the theatre audience philosophically speculates on it, whereas the audience in the arena feeds their excessive passions from the violent deaths they watch.

The role of the conclusion of *Epistle* 120 might seem minor, but it underlines the educative function of drama in the conveyance of the specific moral message since Seneca himself exhorts his interlocutor – and his reader- to maintain one single role in life's drama:

[302] Hopkins 1983, pp. 1-30; Boyle 1997, p. 135.
[303] Boyle 1997, p. 135.
[304] Boyle 1997, p. 136.

> *Hoc ergo a te exige, ut, qualem institueris praestare te, talem usque ad exitum serves. Effice ut possis laudari, si minus, ut adgnosci. De aliquo, quem here vidisti, merito dici potest: "hic qui est?" Tanta mutatio est. Vale.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 120.22.

In other words, through *Epistle* 120 and *Thyestes*, Seneca tells his readers and his audience not to become an Atreus in life who, corrupted by his passions as he was, changed his identity and played various roles in front of his brother to serve the command of the triumphant vice and fortune. The result of his moral evil was the destruction of the natural universe and the gods' retreat. He suggests that one should be aware of her authentic self and maintain it without shifting masks and changing roles. Therefore, he teaches prompts through both his prose and his drama that humans should follow nature and achieve moral development through their οἰκείωσις.[305]

The great importance of the passages in *Epistle* 120.19-22, and especially the quotation from Horace in *Epistle* 120.20 (Horace, *Sat*. 1.3.11-17), consists of aspects, which are all integral to the defence of the Stoic function in Senecan drama. First, *Epistles* 120.19-22 and 95.65-73, 108.35, 121.3 show that the study of one's character and nature is important to find a moral education on what to pursue and what to avoid. It has already been shown that this is a matter of choice of the value externals have, depending on which passions are formed. Second, the exhibition and depiction of characters and examples are more efficient in moving the audience and prompting moral development in them than simple precepts are, and therefore, it shows why Seneca prefers tragedy to writing prose (*Epistles*108). Third, for the exhibition of examples for philosophical purposes the employment of both virtuous and negative examples is acceptable. Last but not least, poets take advantage of the method of χαρακτηρισμός as shown via various examples in Senecan prose (e.g. *Epistles* 120.19). Therefore, Seneca likely employed negative examples[306] of tragic anti-heroes, such as Atreus and Medea, in whom vice triumphed, in his tragedies to prompt his audience to ethical development by illustrating the degraded emotional development of the tragic heroes. Stöckinger and Keane seem to agree on *Medea*'s philosophical reading in conjunction with *Epistles* 108.29-37, where Seneca offers suggestions for various philosophical interpretations of tragedy,[307] and of the character of Medea as a philosophical reflection in contrast to Horace's reading of *Medea*.[308] As shown later on, he achieves the audience's ethical development via the emotional responses the plays provoke in them, meaning the first movements.

Seneca's Preference for Tragedy and Poetic Quotations.

It is worth asking why Seneca chose tragedy as an educational means to convey his ethical stance to the world. One reason would be that tragedy was a genre through which the author had the chance to depict the

[305] On οἰκείωσις, see Görgemanns 1983, pp. 166-168.
[306] Gill 2006, pp. 422-423.
[307] Stöckinger 2017, p.118.
[308] Keane 2011, p. 449.

mythical past in order to comment on contemporary reality, drawing from different approaches and disciplines (philosophy, sociology, religion, psychology).[309] Furthermore, tragedy was seen not merely as a means of pleasure and an *imago* of the human soul but also as a rhetorical counterpart of a trial where the poet functions as an orator and a judge.[310] Furthermore, the ethical dimension of tragedy was already established.[311] Furthermore, Konstan argues that there is rhetoric and logical declamation in Seneca's plays,[312] which may well suggest intentions beyond aesthetic pleasure. He discusses with approval Degiovanni's argument that there is a coherent pattern of rhetoric in Heracles' words in *Hercules Furens* 1-98, which is further linked with Stoic premises.[313] Seneca, therefore, is in line with the common practices and habits of actively reading literature or watching plays, which was a characteristic of classical literature in antiquity,[314] since he demands that his spectators or readers be active and engaged by providing implied information and inviting associations.[315] Additionally, both Seneca's plays and those of his predecessors are charged with political content, and hence, commentary on contemporary controversies and events, such as tyranny. Throughout the tradition of tragic literature, Seneca's tragedies were generally regarded as inferior facsimiles of his Greek predecessors.[316] However, Regenbongen[317] and Herington[318] have stimulated new appreciation of the tragedies' 'strong dramatic power, nightmarish details, historical relevance, and psychological complexity,' which has increasingly led to the broader acknowledgement of their importance: Seneca employs the Greek myths as raw material for his tragic universe, which he creates on his own and tailors with his interests in philosophy, literature, rhetoric, and politics,[319] as his own comments in his philosophical prose show.

The theatre was prevalent in Seneca's time (*Epistles* 76, 108; *Providentia* 2.9),[320] and his texts are riddled with thoughts and observations about poetry. Cicero already comments that the poets and the stage can

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[309] Griffith 1999, p. 26.
[310] Staley 2010, 85; Eden 1986, 5.
[311] Despite some oppositions to the educative role of tragedy (Griffin 1998; Heath 1987, pp. 46-47, 88), there is a general consensus in the relation between tragedy and moral improvement (Croally 2005, pp. 56-58, 60; Dover 1993), since it trains the audience in emotional behaviour and in judging human action (Eden 2005, p. 48). Also, tragedy depicts extremity, imbalance and hyperbole in human behaviour, highlighting the personal responsibility for one's actions, which ultimately leads to an excess of their pain. To resolve this cycle, the tragic characters need to transform, leading the audience to speculate on issues of moral complexity, pointing to that man's actions and choices matter (Connolly 1978, pp. 551, 553-556). Furthermore, see Sommerstein 2005, pp. 163-164, 173-174 for poet's responsibility to connect audience and myths through aetiology as a philosophical motive.
[312] Konstan 2015. See also Davis 2015, pp. 163-167, who demonstrates the socio-political function of Roman tragedy, paralleling and providing a political reading of Accius' *Atreus* and Seneca's *Thyestes*, linking the former to Tiberius and the latter to Caligula's tyranny. Also, Star explores philosophical arguments and principles evident in Roman tragedies and he investigates Accius' Atreus' words 'let them hate provided they fear' [*oderint*]' (203 R^3, 168 W), arguing for continuity between tragedy and philosophy during both the Republic and Empire (Star 2015, p. 241). It seems that Roman tragedy was regarded both for its aesthetical value and for its socio-political role.
[313] Konstan 2015, p. 106.
[314] On the active role of the readers, see Konstan 2006; 2009; 2010; Johnson 2010.
[315] Konstan 2015, p. 106.
[316] Trinacty 2015, p. 29.
[317] Regenbogen 1927-8.
[318] Herington 1966.
[319] Trinacty 2015, p. 29.
[320] See also Boyle 2006, pp. 180-182; Graver & Long 2015, pp. 8-9. For the chronological order for the exact birth of Roman tragedy or the evolution of Greek postclassical tragedy, see Xanthakis - Karamanos 1980; Manuwald 2015; Habinek 1998, pp. 34-68, 179-189; Suerbaum 2002, pp. 83-87; Schiesaro 2005, p. 269; Boyle 2006; Frank 1995, pp. 1-16; Kohn

be as influential as the teachers and the parents,[321] and he believes that the tragic characters' moral exhortations and advice on stage are really addressing the audience rather than their interlocutors commenting some lines from Accius's *Atreus* (170-194).[322] Seneca often quotes tragedy to enhance their philosophical arguments. Quantilian's anecdote, in particular, which involved a debate between Seneca and Pomponius on the use of a phrase in tragedy (*gradus eliminat*),[323] indicates Seneca's involvement in and knowledge of Roman drama (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 8.3.31).[324] Furthermore, in Seneca's philosophical prose, there is more solid evidence that he was of the opinion that reading and attending public festivities (*Tranq*. 17.4-11; 7), among other activities, can offer some kind of light relaxation, which is important to children's education (*De Ira* 2.20.3). The right kind of poetry, then, could be beneficial to this philosophical education, since a Stoic reading of poetry would be rational and virtue-provoking with the aid of the emotions which it can elicit.

Despite the inferior position of tragedy and theatre to philosophy,[325] the former is praised elsewhere in the Senecan corpus.[326] Tragedy is highly regarded and holds a prominent position in comparison to the other theatrical arts;[327] within a hierarchy of arts, tragedy comes second to philosophy, as it conveys knowledge that philosophers already possess or should have expressed. However, within poetry alone, there is also some kind of hierarchy, according to which tragedians and togata plays are attributed with some form of seriousness (*aliquid seueritatis*, *Epistles* 8.8). According to Seneca, there is some learning involved in the theatrical genre,

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2003, pp. 271-280). In the influence of traditions of tragic Greek models and literature on Roman theatre or the view of Roman tragedies as facsimiles of Greek plays, see Manuwald 2015, p. 15; 2011, pp. 15-40; 2016, pp. 331-336; Feeney 2005; Habinek 1998, pp. 34-68; 2005; Zorzetti 1991; Gruen 1990, pp. 79-123; Suerbaum 2002; 2003; Cowan 2015. On philosophical themes in early Roman literature and Ennius, see Dutsch 2014; Garbarino 1973, pp. 287–288, 302. See also Harrison 2015, p. 118; Davis 2015; Star 2015, p. 240; Mal-Maeder 2007, pp. 117-119.

[321] Cicero, *De Legibus* 1.47: *Nam sensus nostros non parens, non nutrix, non magister, non poeta, non scena depravat, non multitudinis consensus abducit.* ('For our senses are not perverted by parent, nurse, teacher, poet, or the stage, nor led astray by popular feeling').

[322] Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 59: *Nonne, quae scripsit gravis ille et ingeniosus poëta, scripsit non ut illos regios pueros, qui iam nusquam erant, sed ut nos et nostros liberos ad laborem et laudem excitaret. ('*These lines were written by an earnest and gifted poet, whose object in writing them was to kindle the spirit of industry and ambition, not in those young princes who were merely the figments of his imagination, but in us and in our children'). See also Cic. *Rab. Post.* 29.

[323] The phrase is evident in early Roman tragedy Ennius, *Scaenica* 256 (238 Jocelyn) as Russel comments in Russel 2001, p. 359, n 35.

[324] Tarrant 1995, p. 220.

[325] In Seneca's philosophical texts, there is some evidence that may seem to suggest he was not in favour of educative theatre or poetry. He says that, except for philosophy, no field of study is capable of cultivating moral progress, developing ethical character and personality, and making a good man (*Quidam illud de liberalibus studiis quaerendum iudicauerunt, an uirum bonum facerent: ne promittunt quidem nec huius rei scientiam adfectant, Epistles* 88.2), and that the arts are useful tools, but they do not suffice to teach about life (*Epistles* 95.8-9). Seneca distinguishes theatre from philosophy, claiming that the former is simply an art which aims at pleasure (*sicut in theatrum uoluptatis causa ad delectandas aures oratione uel uoce uel fabulis ducimur*. *Epistles* 108.6) He also says that philosophy differs from tragedy as the former lacks the eloquence of the latter (*tragice grande*) and aims primarily at intellectual and moral improvement rather than applause or approval (*ad profectum omnia tendund ad bonam mentem; non quaeritur plausus*. *Epistles* 100.10-11). However, philosophy eliciting applause is not forbidden; it is a different kind of applause, though, as there is a distinction between the applause in the theatre and the lecture hall (*inter clamorem et scholae*), and philosophy always aims at an intellectual goal without caring for the applause (*Epistles* 52.12).

[326] Felicio 2023, p. 314.

[327] Seneca, *Epistles* 8.8: *Quam multi poetae dicunt quae philosophis aut dicta sunt aut dicenda! Non attingam tragicos nec togatas nostras. Habent enim hae quoque aliquid seueritatis et sunt inter comoedias ac tragoedias mediae. Quantum disertissimorum uersuum inter mimos iacet! Quam multa Publilii non excalceatis sed coturnatis dicenda sunt.*

pantomime performances as well, and especially tragedy, which is most appropriate for learning (*coturnatis dicenda sunt, Epistles* 8.8).

Poetic quotations in Seneca serve a moral function, as the ethical precepts expressed and conveyed in verse possess a parenetic ability[328] to prompt the audience to take ethical actions. Poetic quotation can engage the intellect and soul[329] in ways that books and mere philosophy cannot. Seneca seems to believe that not only poetic quotations but also a vivid example could stimulate one's soul in a more sufficient way than a book could ever do when sending some books to his interlocutor:

> *Plus tamen tibi et viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit. In rem praesentem venias oportet, primum, quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt; deinde, quia longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 6.5-6.

Seneca is clear that people tend to believe more in their eyes and ears than in written speech; one's character and example are more persuasive than mere words. Hence, one should invest in showing precepts intertwined with examples and action, as many philosophers did. One's morality is indicated by one's character and example, not by one's sheer theories.[330] Therefore, Seneca employed poetic citations to enhance his moral teachings, and he also recontextualised tragic plays to serve his philosophical purposes, draw the attention of his audience, and stimulate them, as will be demonstrated in detail throughout this thesis. Furthermore, it is significant that Seneca's statement is that the first remedy to cure the angry and mad man occurs by showing that one should not defend the passion of anger as Aristotle does (*De Ira* 3.3.1). On the contrary, Seneca argues that one needs to set before one's eyes what a monster one has turned into because of anger:

> *Necessarium est itaque foeditatem eius ac feritatem coarguere et ante oculos ponere quantum monstri sit homo in hominem furens quantoque impetu ruat non sine pernicie sua perniciosus et ea deprimens, quae mergi nisi cum mergente non possunt.*[331]

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[328] Pace 2024, pp. 167-168.
[329] Mazzoli 1970, pp. 105-106.
[330] Seneca, *Epistles* 6.5-6: *Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si tantummodo audisset; vitae eius interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum, an ex formula sua viveret. Platon et Aristoteles et omnis in diversum itura sapientium turba plus ex moribus quam ex verbis Socratis traxit; Metrodorum et Hermarchum et Polyaenum magnos viros non schola Epicuri sed contubernium fecit. Nec in hoc te accerso tantum, ut proficias, sed ut prosis; plurimum enim alter alteri conferemus.* ('Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno, if he had merely heard his lectures; he shared in his life, saw into his hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words of Socrates. It was not the class-room of Epicurus, but living together under the same roof, that made great men of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaenus. Therefore I summon you, not merely that you may derive benefit, but that you may confer benefit; for we can assist each other greatly.').
[331] Translation can be drawn from Basore 1928. On the necessity to set an issue in front of one's eyes, see Chapter 3.

Seneca, *De Ira* 3.3.2-3.

There is a need to show before one's eyes the ugliness of passions, and that the means to do so are poetry and tragic examples. Seneca's use of poetic quotations is evident mainly in his *Epistles*, where he quotes, among others, Euripidean verses, despite his preference for Latin verse.[332] Seneca's poetic quotations drawn from Greek poets are usually translated into Latin or paraphrased,[333] although there are instances when he leaves the Greek language intact, as in *Apocolocyntosis* 4.2-3 (χαίροντας, εὐφημοῦντας ἐκπέμπειν δόμων (E. *Cresph*. Fr. 449.6 K.)), where he employs a convivial and consolatory scene to satirise and underline the circumstances under which Claudius died, and how the characters disliked him.[334] In both cases, Pace mentions that verse in Seneca (and in Plutarch) is 'redramatized'.[335] In Seneca, the verse is recontextualised and integrated with moral discourse so that the characters are depicted under a different light,[336] approached with a Stoic and therapeutic intention. Seneca, however, approaches and recharacterises the tragic characters by example as well as with tragic quotations since he implements his Stoic theory and recontextualises Greek theatre. Pace shows the affinity between Greek models and Seneca's plays by analysing the *sententiae* in *Oedipus* and *Troades*, inferring that Seneca reinterprets the tragic characters.[337] Indeed, Seneca's approach to tragedy is not simply mimetic; Seneca analyses his characters and employs them for Stoic therapy. Also, there is a theatre-like content in which Seneca exhorts his audience to moral actions by certain characters in the plays who act in a parenetic manner and use the third-person plural verb *iubent* (or ἐκέλευον in Plutarch).[338] Another example of a Euripidean quotation is found in his *Epistula* 49, where Seneca quotes verse 469 from Euripides' *Phoenissae*:[339]

> *Nam ut ait ille tragicus,*[340] *Veritatis simplex oratio est. Ideoque illam inplicari non oportet; nec enim quicquam minus convenit quam subdola ista calliditas animis magna conantibus. Vale.*

Seneca, *Epistles* 49.12.

Seneca, at the end of his discussion about the brevity of life, quotes Euripides to stress the importance of simplicity in language.[341] According to Pace,[342] he recontextualises Euripides' verse so that he can emphasise

[332] Mazzoli 1970, pp. 158-159.
[333] Setaioli 1988, pp. 60-89.
[334] Pace 2024, pp. 172- 174; Bonandini 2010, p. 101, n. 219.
[335] Pace 2024, p. 175.
[336] Pace 2024, p. 180.
[337] Pace 2024, pp. 175-179.
[338] Roncali 1969, p. 409; Pace 2024, p. 175; also called ''plurilinguismo'' in Fucecchi 2003, p. 119.
[339] For Seneca's *Poenissae* and his knowledge of the Augustan tragedies, see Frank 1995, pp. 24-25.
[340] The author's note in Gummere 1917, p. 329, provides the Greek verse in Euripides, *Phoenissae* 469: ἁπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφυ.
[341] See also Pace 2024, pp. 168-172. Pace 2024, p. 172, traces an echo of Euripidean verse 469 in *Phoenissae* in Seneca's *Epistle* 40.4. See also Mazzoli 1970, p. 174, n. 58 and Setaioli 1988, p. 68 n. 289, for an argument about the existence or non-existence of the Euripidean echo in *Epistle* 40.4.
[342] Pace 2024, pp. 168-172.

the need to avoid wasting one's life with trivial things and search for the truth; one should not invest time to unnecessarily complicated and meaningless arguments such as in the Greeks Zeno and Chrysippus,[343] as their speech and truth should be plain and clear. Therefore, Seneca employs tragic quotation to teach and convey moral lessons, but he stresses the importance of avoiding unnecessary complicated arguments in various passages: *Has tenebras discute; et facilius ea trades, ad quae praeparatus sum. Dociles natura nos edidit et rationem dedit inperfectam, sed quae perfici posset.*('Rid me of these shadowy terrors; then you will more easily deliver to me the instruction for which I have prepared myself. At our birth nature made us teachable, and gave us reason, not perfect, but capable of being perfected.' *Epistles* 49.11-12).

Seneca keeps commenting on teaching precepts and avoidance of complicated arguments in *Epistles* 108, which is the main piece of evidence that Seneca employed poetry to stimulate his audience and morally instruct them. In *Epistles* 108.23, Seneca continues talking about the mistakes both teachers and pupils make when they focus wrongly on learning how to debate rendering the study of wisdom a study of words: *Itaque quae philosophia fuit, facta philologia est.* ('Thus the study of wisdom has become the study of words.' *Epistles* 108.23).[344] This passage confirms again that Seneca's quotation of Euripides in *Epistles* 49.12 is in alignment with his moral aspiration. Seneca infers that the study of wisdom, which could be philosophy, is now a study of words, and he uses the term *philologia*. Therefore, it is evident here that Seneca is aware that words and *philologia* are what attracted pupils to learn. Tragedies would be a subject matter of *philologia*, which Seneca further employed for his philosophical purposes.

Seneca explicitly comments on how to interpret tragic verses, and he employs tragic quotations to prove his point. More specifically, in *Epistles* 108.24-30, Seneca shows how each science and man can interpret philological texts such as poetic verses in a different manner since what one has in mind makes a difference in their approach to certain subjects: *Multum autem ad rem pertinet, quo proposito ad quamquam rem accedes (Epistles* 108.24). Seneca quotes Vergilean lines[345] as examples of different readings and interpretations scholars, philologists and philosophers could have. Seneca concludes: *Non est quod mireris ex eadem materia suis quemque studiis apta colligere; in eodem prato bos herbam quaerit, canis leporem, ciconia lacertam.* ('There is no reason why you should marvel that each man can collect from the same source suitable matter for his own studies; for in the same meadow the cow grazes, the dog hunts the hare, and the stork the lizard.' *Epistles* 108.29-30).

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[343] For Zeno see Seneca, *Epistles* 82.9-9.19; For Chrysippus see Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 1.3.8.; *Epistles* 113; Pace 2024, p. 171; Mazzoli 1970, pp. 157-158; Setaioli 1988, pp. 12-13.

[344] Seneca, *Epistles* 108.23: *Sed aliquid praecipientium vitio peccatur, qui nos docent disputare, non vivere, aliquid discentium, qui propositum adferunt ad praeceptores suos non animum excolendi, sed ingenium. Itaque quae philosophia fuit, facta philologia est.* ('There are indeed mistakes made, through the fault of our advisers, who teach us how to debate and not how to live; there are also mistakes made by the pupils, who come to their teachers to develop, not their souls, but their wits. Thus the study of wisdom has become the study of words.').

[345] Seneca, *Epistles* 108.24.4; *Georg*. 3.284: *fugit inreparabile tempus* ('Time flies away, and cannot be restored'), and *Epistles* 108.24.10-12; *Georg*. 3.66: *Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus aevi | Prima fugit; subeunt morbi tristisque senectus | Et labor, et durae rapit inclementia mortis* ('The choicest days of hapless human life | Fly first; disease and bitter eld succeed, | And toil, till harsh death rudely snatches all'). Also, in *Epistles* 108.28-29, Seneca quotes the Vergilean lines *subeunt morbi tristisque senectus* and *Pallentesque habitant morbi tristisque senectus* (*Aen*. 6.275) to analyse a scholar's interpretation of the previous lines he had quoted and comment on the epithet *eld.*

Therefore, Seneca demonstrates here that he employs poetic quotations, a practice he likely shares with others, to enhance and clarify his philosophical points, a common approach in using the same sources across different disciplines. He continues to bolster his argument by drawing on different interpretations of texts by various authors, using examples from Cicero and demonstrating how Cicero employs the same method, as evidenced by his own use of examples from Ennius and Vergil (*Epistles* 108.30-34). Most important, though, are Seneca's comments on how to draw somebody's attention to moral matters, even though words are what attract and impress people; it suffices that one takes proper advantage of the words and applies everything one reads to moral improvement:[346]

> *Sed ne et ipse, dum aliud ago, in philologum aut grammaticum delabar, illud admoneo, auditionem philosophorum lectionemque ad propositum beatae vitae trahendam, non ut verba prisca aut ficta captemus et translationes inprobas figurasque dicendi, sed ut profutura praecepta et magnificas voces et animosas, quae mox in rem transferantur. Sic ista ediscamus, ut quae fuerint verba, sint opera.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 108.35-36.

This passage alone is of great importance to the current thesis since it shows that Seneca thought that one needs to search for precepts (*praecepta, Epistles* 108.35-36) in great words of courage and spirit (*magnificas voces et animosas, Epistles* 108.35-36) and that these precepts work as seeds which might bring deeds and actions in one's behaviour and learning if there is a favourable ground:

> *Seminis modo spargenda sunt, quod quamvis sit exiguum, cum occupavit idoneum locum, vires suas explicat et ex minimo in maximos auctus diffunditur. Idem facit ratio; non late patet, si aspicias; in opere crescit. Pauca sunt, quae dicuntur, sed si illa animus bene excepit, convalescunt et exurgunt. Eadem est, inquam, praeceptorum condicio quae seminum; multum efficiunt, et angusta sunt. Tantum, ut dixi, idonea mens capiat illa et in se trahat. Multa invicem et ipsa generabit et plus reddet quam acceperit. Vale.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 38.2.1-10.

The favourable mind can accept the precepts as seeds of reason (*Epistles* 38.2), but one should not focus on the elaborate figures of speech of the great utterances. It would be safe to infer that many examples of courageous words would be found in tragedies, since Seneca himself uses examples drawn from tragedies in the same epistle (108) where he unfolds the above argument, as also the ones quoted from *Epistle* 49. Also, in the beginning *Epistles* 108, Seneca makes a clear parallel between pupils of philosophy and the audience of poetry in the

[346] Stöckinger, Winter, and Zanker 2017, pp. 217-219. See also *Epistles* 89.18.

theatre, commending the 'squatters' (*inquilinos, Epistles* 108.5) who are not real pupils of the wise (*discipulos philosophorum, Epistles* 108.5):

> *Quidam veniunt ut audiant, non ut discant, sicut in theatrum voluptatis causa ad delectandas aures oratione vel voce vel fabulis ducimur. Magnam hanc auditorum partem videbis, cui philosophi schola deversorium otii sit. Non id agunt, ut aliqua illo vitia deponant, ut aliquam legem vitae accipiant, qua mores suos exigant, sed ut oblectamento aurium perfruantur.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 108.6.

Seneca argues that the same behaviour is evident both in the audience of a theatre and the audience of philosophical lectures. They are both impressed by the elaborate speech, but they are merely there to delight their ears and draw some pleasure from the spectacle or the lecture. Instead, they should be receiving a rule of life by which they would test their characters (*ut aliquam legem vitae accipiant, qua mores suos exigent, Epistles* 108.6.7-8). Therefore, according to Seneca, both poetry and philosophy have the same purpose, which is not only to offer pleasure due to the eloquence of speech but also to convey moral lessons which will form and ethically mould the audience's character. Hence, there is a clear reference to Seneca's opinion on the function of poetry and tragedy, which bridges the seemingly existing chasm between his own tragedy and philosophy. Seneca makes explicit how the audience is stirred and influenced by poetry:

> *Quidam ad magnificas voces excitantur et transeunt in adfectum dicentium alacres vultu et animo, nec aliter concitantur quam solent Phrygii tibicinis sono semiviri et ex imperio furentes. Rapit illos instigatque rerum pulchritudo, non verborum inanium sonitus.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 108.6-7

Poetry is efficient in stirring the mind of the audience, initially because of the use of high-sounding phrases, which later, in the *Epistle* 108, Seneca scorns in his attempt to prompt his readers to look for the meaning of the words. Also, the audience adapts the speaker's passion (*adfectum, Epistles* 108.6-7), which results in a physical change to their face and their mind. The latter is philosophically explained and well supported by Stoic physics, which views passions as a corporeal event in one's mind that is manifested on one's face.[347] However, the true hearer will reach a deeper level, and they will not be impressed only by the language but also by the beauty of the meaning which is conveyed (*Epistles* 108.7.2-3). Therefore, a careful and active listener will truly benefit from poetry since they will manage to receive the moral message and examine their own character (*Epistles* 108.6.7). Seneca admits that in theatre, words of great importance have the power to influence the hearer:

[347] See Chapter 3 in the current thesis.

Non vides, quemadmodum theatra consonent, quotiens aliqua dicta sunt, quae publice adgnoscimus et consensu vera esse testamur?

Seneca, *Epistles* 108.8.5-7.

Seneca admits the value of the theatre in that the audience is in a position where they can recognise the self through a confession of the truth (*confessionem veritatis*, *Epistles* 108.8-12). In examining the characters' sickness, the spectator will recognise herself, and the still detached sense of self-recognition and confession will enhance the motivation to dwell more on literature and appreciate humanity[348], imperfect as it is. He also believes that the tragic characters' moral exhortations on stage are really addressing the audience rather than their interlocutors (Cic. *Planc.* 59).

Immediately after admitting the importance of theatre, Seneca quotes the lines *Desunt inopiae multa, avaritiae omnia. / In nullum avarus bonus est, in se pessimus* ('The poor lack much; the greedy man lacks all. A greedy man does good to none; he does most evil to himself.' *Epistles* 108.9.1-2). There is an obvious philosophical meaning in these verses, as Seneca refers to the *indifferentia*[349] that a greedy man desires. Due to his own desire, he brings evil upon himself, a moral evil in his soul. On these verses, Seneca continues:

Ad hos versus ille sordidissimus plaudit et vitiis suis fieri convicium gaudet; quanto magis hoc iudicas evenire, cum a philosopho ista dicuntur, cum salutaribus praeceptis versus inseruntur, efficacius eadem illa demissuri in animum imperitorum?

Seneca, *Epistles* 108.9-10.

Therefore, precepts in verses and verses in philosophy allow the philosopher to make them 'sink more effectively into the mind of the neophyte' (*efficacius eadem illa demissuri in animum imperitorum , Epistles* 108.10-1-2). Seneca provides a clear analysis on how to approach both philosophy and tragedy by using precepts to stir one's mind and soul emotionally and morally. Seneca also places himself within the Stoic tradition of employing tragic quotations since he also quotes Cleanthes' view (Frag. 487 von Arnim) on philosophical meaning formed in verse:

"Nam," ut dicebat Cleanthes, "quemadmodum spiritus noster clariorem sonum reddit, cum illum tuba per longi canalis angustias tractum patentiore novissime exitu effudit, sic sensus nostros clariores carminis arta necessitas efficit."

[348] Nussbaum 1993, p. 144.
[349] For *indifferentia,* see Chapters 1 and 5 in the current thesis.

Seneca, *Epistles* 108.10.2-6.

Poetry enhances and helps the audience to understand philosophical meaning. Additionally, it is noteworthy that Seneca quotes a Stoic philosopher who also wrote poetry, as this may provide insight into Seneca's use and production of poetry. More specifically, the above quotations suggest that Seneca's tragedies convey moral messages like Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus, which conveys Stoic messages more likely to be valid. Indeed, Seneca argues that the same words are less impressive in prose:

> *Eadem neglegentius audiuntur minusque percutiunt, quamdiu soluta oratione dicuntur; ubi accessere numeri et egregium sensum adstrinxere certi pedes, eadem illa sententia velut 11lacerto excussiore1 torquetur.*

Seneca, *Epistles* 108.10-11.

For Seneca, metre and poetry have the effect of clarifying and drawing one's attention, helping one to absorb and integrate the message of the speaker in ways prose could not:

> *Magis tamen feriuntur animi, cum carmina eiusmodi dicta sunt:*
>
> *Is minimo eget mortalis, qui minimum cupit.*
> *Quod vult habet, qui velle quod satis est potest.*
>
> *Cum haec atque eiusmodi audimus, ad confessionem veritatis adducimur.*[350]

Seneca, *Epistles* 108.11-12.

The above passage can also be deemed as evidence and implementation of Seneca's use of tragic quotation and poetry. As a teacher, Seneca is meant to cure people and show them the way to living a happy and moral life; he has a natural duty to spread the seeds of philosophy, the precepts in verses, which in a true hearer will turn into deeds, as shown in *Epistle* 108.6-7 and also in *Epistle* 108.35-36 (*Sic ista ediscamus, ut quae fuerint verba, sint opera*. 'We should so learn them that words may become deeds.'). Seneca wants to stir one's spirit with the aid of a poetic stimulus so that his audience is drawn to righteousness as inclined by Nature. Seneca wants to sow the seeds of righteousness by using poetic words (*Epistles* 108.8).[351] Words will turn into seeds, and the

[350] Translation can be drawn from Gummere 2015.
[351] Seneca, *Epistles* 108.8: *Facile est auditorem concitare ad cupidinem recti; omnibus enim natura fundamenta dedit semenque virtutum. Omnes ad omnia ista nati sumus; cum inritator accessit, tunc illa anima bona veluti soluta excitatur.*

seeds will turn into deeds. Even the most difficult audience can be intrigued by verse: *Illi enim, quibus nihil satis est, admirantur, adclamant, odium pecuniae indicunt.* ('Even men in whose opinion nothing is enough, wonder and applaud when they hear such words, and swear eternal hatred against money.' *Epistles* 108.12). This is the point at which philosophical merging begins. There is no need for 'side-shows of ineffective smartness' such as 'double meanings, syllogisms, hair-splitting': *Hunc illorum adfectum cum videris, urge, hoc preme, hoc onera relictis ambiguitatibus et syllogismis et cavillationibus et ceteris acuminis inriti ludicris.* (*Epistles* 108.12).

Furthermore, Seneca wishes to 'impress' by stirring his listeners' minds to proceed further to a philosophical cure:

> *Cum profecisse te videris et animos audientium adfeceris, insta vehementius; veri simile non est, quantum proficiat talis oratio remedio intenta et tota in bonum audientium versa.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 108.12.

Seneca has ascribed to himself the role of a philosophical doctor who, by nature, is meant to cure his hearers and help them improve and make progress. Poetry functions as the first philosophical seed which impresses the audience. However, this is not easy, and it cannot deeply affect every individual, hence the need for a strong first impression to draw the audience's attention:

> *Si quid acriter contra mortem dictum est, si quid contra fortunam contumaciter, iuvat protinus quae audias, facere. Adficiuntur illis et sunt quales iubentur, si illa animo forma permaneat, si non impetum insignem protinus populus, honesti dissuasor, excipiat; pauci illam, quam conceperant mentem, domum perferre potuerunt.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 108.7-8.

Therefore, theatre creates a counter impulse and a mindset in opposition to the impulses of passions. However, it is difficult for the mental attitude acquired in theatre to be maintained when the individual is out in the world again, being influenced by the populace who prompts towards dishonourable impulses. Seneca, cleverly, employs the notion of first movements,[352] the προπάθειαι, created when one listens to a poetic verse, to his advantage so that he can counter the passions (*adfecti*) and start passions' therapy. The audience experiences the

('It is easy to rouse a listener so that he will crave righteousness; for Nature has laid the foundations and planted the seeds of virtue in us all. And we are all born to these general privileges; hence, when the stimulus is added, the good spirit is stirred as if it were freed from bonds.').

[352] For an analysis of the three stages of passions, see Seneca, *De Ira* 2.4.2. The feeling of first disturbances is further analysed in the current Chapter, pp. 24-32.

preliminary stage of passion, enabling them to learn how to prevent or cure their passions through poetry. Προπάθειαι stir their mind and create mental impressions which promote their ethical improvement.

The goal to cure his audience's passions, which relate to their reactions to *Fortuna* and death, is also evident in this passage in the following line: *Si quid acriter contra mortem dictum est, si quid contra fortunam contumaciter, iuvat protinus quae audias, facere*. ('When a bold word has been uttered in defiance of death, or a saucy fling in defiance of Fortune, we take delight in acting straightway upon that which we have heard.' *Epistles* 108.7-8). Individuals' quick reactions are often owed to their misconception of *Fortuna*, on which there are many precepts in Seneca's plays. The connection between the theory and its implementation is clear. Seneca analyses how theatre influences the audience when they hear verses about *Fortuna* and death, and in his own tragedies, makes many references to Stoic maxims about *Fortuna*.[353] Therefore, Seneca's poetry has indeed philosophical purposes as he admits (*Epistles* 108.38-39),[354] as he wishes to become a better teacher and steer his audience, not just talk (*Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum. Epistles* 108. 37):

> *Exempla enim se ipsos inutilis disciplinae circumferunt nulli non vitio, quod insequuntur, obnoxii. Non magis mihi potest quisquam talis prodesse praeceptor quam gubernator in tempestate nauseabundus. Tenendum rapiente fluctu gubernaculum, luctandum cum ipso mari, eripienda sunt vento vela; quid me potest adiuvare rector navigii attonitus et vomitans? Quanto maiore putas vitam tempestate iactari quam ullam ratem? Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 108.36-37.

The way a teacher lives should align with their advice: *Nullos autem peius mereri de omnibus mortalibus iudico quam qui philosophiam velut aliquod artificium venale didicerunt, qui aliter vivunt quam vivendum esse praecipiunt.* ('And I hold that no man has treated mankind worse than he who has studied philosophy as if it were some marketable trade, who lives in a different manner from that which he advises.' *Epistles* 108.36). A teacher should not let *Fortuna*, similarly to the sea, influence him and make him change his way, scare him and lose control of his rational faculty. A teacher needs to be firm and steer to navigate and train the audience's mind; not let the words take him towards all directions and cause various faulty impressions and impulses. Therefore, the combination of the two passages (*Epistles* 108. 36-37 and *Epistles* 108.38-39) show that Seneca means to be the Stoic teacher who is not distracted by the words, and he navigates his audience through the

[353] On *Fortuna* and *Indifferentia*, see Chapter 5.

[354] Seneca, *Epistles* 108.38-39: *Omnia quae dicunt, quae turba audiente iactant, aliena sunt; dixit illa Platon, dixit Zenon, dixit Chrysippus et Posidonius et ingens agmen nostrorum tot ac talium. Quomodo probare possint sua esse, monstrabo: faciant, quae dixerint.* ('All the words that these men utter and juggle before a listening crowd, belong to others. They have been spoken by Plato, spoken by Zeno, spoken by Chrysippus or by Posidonius, and by a whole host of Stoics as numerous as excellent. I shall show you how men can prove their words to be their own: it is by doing what they have been talking about.').

poetic verses so that they can show them how to behave during the storm and the adversities and indifferents fickle *Fortuna* brings or in front of the prospect of death.[355]

Hence, in *Epistles* 108.5-12, Seneca lays out his thoughts on the use of poetry in philosophical education, the natural inclination to teaching and receiving teaching, the impressive effect of poetry to stir one's mind and the ways the effect influences the hearer emotionally and morally, which is evidenced on their face. Also, the natural inclination to teach and be taught by using precepts and words as seeds is also evident in the aforementioned passages, along with the passages on appropriation. The current thesis explains how Seneca implements his aspirations by employing his tragic plays to spread Stoicism and cure his audience's passions.

Therefore, the importance of tragedy for educational purposes in Seneca has been established. A few more passages will be able to clarify who the appropriate audience for Seneca's educative tragedies is and how the latter succeeds in promoting the moral advancement of the former. Liberal arts (first letters and poetry) are the first step on the education ladder (*Epistles* 88.30); they are the initial phase of learning for the *proficiens*,[356] and serve as preparation for virtue and philosophy (*Epistles* 88.20), which in *Epistles* 88 is the ultimate liberal art. Therefore, I suggest that his own tragedies were intended to serve as secondary pedagogical tools to motivate the *proficiens* toward the path of philosophy. Even if people attend the theatre chiefly for the pleasure of their ears (*Epistles* 108.6), wisdom operates as the sun that tans everyone (*Epistles* 108.4), and it can be imbued through the pleasures of the theatre (*Epistles* 108.11). Hence, in the theatre, through pleasure comes wisdom and knowledge.

The impact of Seneca's tragedies on the audience

In this section, I will analyse how tragedy can contribute to the audience's moral progress. I argue that the audience, similarly to Seneca's reader,[357] needs to put some effort into attending to the plays, actively watching, and critically thinking, in order to be morally influenced. The audience of a performed play on stage is to have its emotions stirred and experience the 'progressor emotions',[358] which are similar to προπάθειαι, and the agent gives her assent to an external stimulus which will foster her moral progress towards virtue. I base the comparison between the reader and the audience on Seneca's *De Ira*, where he discusses a similar emotional reaction to reading, visual arts, and performances on stage, among other experiences (*De Ira* 2.2.1-6, especially 2.2.3). Seneca also mentions a certain kind of pleasure (*voluptas, Epistles* 4.1-2)[359] and the need of indivisualisation performed by the learners (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 2.4.5) – tragedy offers not the general case

[355] In Chapter 5, there are many examples of heroes trusting the 'empty words' and gifts of *Fortuna,* which resembles a whirlpool which drags their boat. These examples align with Seneca's *Epistles* 108.36-37, where in contrast to heroes' blind trust to *Fortuna*, a wise man would steer their boat, their mind.
[356] Seneca, *Epistles* 88.2: *Non discere debemus ista, sed didicisse.*
[357] For Seneca's trained reader of the *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium,* see Graver 2023, Chapter 9.
[358] I borrow the term from Graver 2023, Chapter 9, and 2007, pp. 191-211. Brennan refers to the same mental event as 'veridical emotions', Brennan 1998, pp. 50-51.
[359]Seneca, *Epistles* 4.1-2*: alia tamen illa voluptas est, quae percipitur ex contemplatione mentis ab omni labe purae et splendidae.* ('But quite different is the pleasure which comes from contemplation when one's mind is so cleansed from every stain that it shines.' Translation is drawn from Gummere 1917).

(*in universum*) but the specific, individual cases and examples, explicitly shows the human failing and suffering and stirs (semi-)emotions of fear, shock and terror (disgust) so that the audience will critically think of the characters depicted as anti-examples of a virtuous life. The power of vivid examples evokes an emotional reaction in the audience, a first movement or a pre-passion, a προπάθεια, which is of educative and therapeutic value in contrast to passions properly discussed in the first chapter. Nussbaum claims that poetry influences the soul mainly by altering the passions.[360]

At this point, a clarification should be made since there is a long-standing debate on whether Seneca's tragedies were composed for performance or as written texts aimed at readers.[361] Close readings of Seneca's plays presuppose a number of theatrical aspects which would not work as well if they were without performance in mind.[362] However, the Stoic function of Seneca's plays is not jeopardised even if the plays were not performed since they created a mental image in the audience's mind, which sufficed for the visual element to stir their soul.[363] Even purely written descriptions of passions could still draw the audience's attention toward a more adequate comprehension of the nature and function of the inner mental and emotional processes of the characters and, as a result, to their moral education, which align with the stress on the physicality and visualisation of the tragic action—usually some kind of anagnorisis or a crime—as the climactic tragic action comes as the third step in the procedure of the formation of a passion, as Seneca described in his *De Ira* 2.2.1-2.4.2.[364] Unfortunately, evidence is limited,[365] and a further analysis would exceed the scope of the current thesis.

An audience's reaction is caused either by reading, listening or watching the plays. The terms *voluptas,* ἡδονή and *gaudium,* χαρά (*De Vita Beata* 7.1-2; 27.4; *Epistles* 59.1-4; 23.4-5; *De Ira* 2.35.1; 3.6.4; *Naturales Quaestiones* 3.30.1; 7.30.2) are used by Seneca in connection with the tragedies and the reaction of the audience. The auditor experiences some kind of 'rational elevation' and τέρψις caused by the γοητεία of poetry. I will claim that the plays, which are supposed to be proper examples of poetry and, therefore, approved by the Stoics, cause a second-order pleasure[366] which elevates the soul and promotes moral amelioration both for the young who are willing to learn and the uneducated who need to be 'persuaded'. Seneca's tragedy stirs the emotions of the spectators, causing pre-passions or some kind of second-order pleasure which eventually offers them an aesthetic and moral elevation (*De Ira* 1.2.5; 2.20.3; 3.9.1-3). The conclusions are twofold: Seneca's drama has

[360] Nussbaum 1993, p. 98.
[361] For the anti-performance view, see Schlegel 1809. 'der Literaturpapst der deutschen Romantik' (Stroh 1994, p. 249). Schlegel (1809) in Lefèvre 1972, 14; Stroh 1994, p. 249; Boissier 1861; Leo 1878-9; Zwierlein 1966; Fitch 2000, p. 1; Fantham 1982, pp. 34-49; Goldberg 2000; Mayer 2002, pp. 19-35; Herington 1966, p. 445; Walker 1969, p. 184; Beare 1945. For a pro-performance view, see Fortey & Glucker 1975, p. 699; Herrmann 1924, pp. 153-232; Grimal 1983; Braun 1982; Dihle 1983; Calder 1975; Sutton 1986; Ahl 1986, pp. 18, 27; Kohn 2003; Boyle 1997, pp. 11-12; pp. 20-27. The terms 'anti-performance' and 'pro-performance' from Fitch 2000 1-12, where he summarises the debate on Senecan's plays' performance.
[362] See also Tarrant 1978, 1985; Bexley 2015, pp. 775-779, 783; Braun 1982, pp. 45-47; Haley 2015, p. 7; Fitch 1987, p. 352; 2000, p. 3-4.
[363] For the vividness of the mental image tragedy caused to the audience and its impact, see Chapter 3.
[364] For Seneca's three stages of passions see Chapter 1 of the current project.
[365] The only surviving evidence is Quintilian's *Inst*. 8.3.31 which is a reference to a conversation between Seneca and Pomponius Secundus on *praefationes*, which was supposed to preface *recitatio*.
[366] The term will later be defined in terms of Stoic moral psychology.

a moral effect on the spectators, which is a first cognitive step towards virtue and the eradication of the passions, meaning they develop a certain kind of emotional reaction that, however, is under their control, allowing them to cultivate their personalities morally.

Furthermore, moral progress is actualised through the vicarious experience of the heroes' passions[367] with the aid of ἀποτροπή (Strabo 1.2.8)[368] and ἔκπληξις as a form of shock and the spectators' emotional involvement, and it remains a cognitive procedure. The Furies are fire–inspiring for Seneca and the perfect image of anger (*inferna monstra*, *De Ira* 2.35.6). There is no evidence of an irrational part of the soul, which is activated, which would imply that vice and passions had won the battle with the right Reason.[369] Through the mimesis of the passions on stage, the prepared audience can be emotionally affected at a safe distance, identify with the characters, and develop semi-passions of fear and pity. Many scholars have applied to Senecan plays a term borrowed from modern theatre; the self-reflexive nature of Seneca's drama might reflect some kind of 'alienation effect' which permits the audience to take distance from the events happening on the stage, yet still grapple with the issues raised.[370] A moderate pleasure of the aesthetic experience of poetry would be beneficial in a moral context, so that the conscientious spectator would be motivated to walk the path to the extirpation of passions.

Nussbaum[371] believes that the Stoic theatre surpasses the Aristotelean identification with the tragic heroes which produces the passions of fear and pity, and therefore brings the spectator too close to the emotional world of the characters, which clouds their judgement and emotionally torments them. The Stoic view of the audience though provides, through Chrysippus' medical analogy, a spectator who is concerned about the tragic characters and yet is not contaminated by their 'diseases' i.e. their evaluative and cognitive errors; therefore, she is not at risk of developing fear and pity or becoming enmeshed in an emotional chaotic vortex which blurs her mind and judgment, just as a doctor is able to take measures to protect himself from the illness he is supposed to treat. Seneca suggests that men suffering from passions should be involved with activities such as reading, poetry, and theatre, as these can function as remedies for passion (*De Ira* 3.9.1-3). Similarly, Nussbaum argues that the Stoic approach escapes Plutarch's charge that the complete absence of passions in literature would lead to a boring theatre; a doctor (following the literary use of the medical analogy) would not be bored by his subjects, he'd be intrigued to examine, explain and treat their ailments. The Stoic spectator is called to apply the same method to the tragic figures by showing compassion and being genuinely interested in their suffering. His tools and weapons are detachment from the emotional whirlpool of the tragic character, the implementation of philosophical commentary and analysis of their belief system, compassion and curiosity.[372] Although Seneca

[367] Staley 2010, 77-81; Huber 1973, pp. 122-123.
[368] Tarrant 1985b, pp. 24-25.
[369] For more on the defeat of Reason, see Chapter 4 in the current thesis.
[370] Star 2016, p. 50. See also Nussbaum 1993, pp. 146-148; Littlewood 2004, p. 50; Schiesaro 2003, pp. 246-251 on the connection of Brechtian elements and Seneca drama.
[371] Nussbaum 1993, pp. 143-144.
[372] Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 3.4; 4.29; 10.13; Epictetus, *Ἐγχειρίδιον* 13. Epictetus argues that one needs to seem unknowledgeable for genuine curiosity and learning: Εἰ προκόψαι θέλεις, ὑπόμεινον ἕνεκα τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀνόητος δόξας καὶ ἠλίθιος, μηδὲν βούλου δοκεῖν ἐπίστασθαι (If you wish to make progress, then be content to appear senseless and foolish in

warns against rampant curiosity as a sign of intemperance (*Epistles* 88),[373] he argues that Nature reveals only a part of her wonders and stirs man's curiosity to investigate her unrevealed parts:

> *Deinde sena per diem, sena per noctem signa perducens nullam non partem sui explicuit, ut per haec, quae optulerat oculis eius, cupiditatem faceret etiam ceterorum. Nec enim omnia nec tanta visimus quanta sunt, sed acies nostra aperit sibi investigandi viam et fundamenta vero iacit, ut inquisitio transeat ex apertis in obscura et aliquid ipso mundo inveniat antiquius.*
>
> Seneca, *De Otio* 8.5.4-5.

Seneca's view is in accordance with the claim that a philosopher, as a spokesman of Reason, which is equal to Nature, has the duty to teach Reason by stirring their audience's curiosity through vision. Nature has rendered humans spectators to watch her miracles (*Ut scias illam spectari voluisse, non tantum aspici, vide quem nobis locum dederit.* 'That you may understand how she wished us, not merely to behold her, but to gaze upon her, see the position in which she has placed us.' *De Otio* 8.5.4*)* and learn how the world works.[374] All humans have a natural curiosity that can be satisfied through philosophical investigation and inquiry (*Epistles* 59.16).[375] In the current thesis, I argue that Seneca's tragedies' function is to stir the curiosity of the spectators to investigate the hidden causes of the tragic characters' passions by the aid of the tragic examples, since the human arts are the preparatory stage towards more elevated topics and they are used as a ladder to the latter (*Epistles* 88.1).[376] Indeed, Seneca holds that Nature has not rendered this world evil and that men need admonition to rightly judge the external stimuli that they receive every day:

> *Sit ergo aliquis custos et aurem subinde pervellat abigatque rumores et reclamet populis laudantibus. Erras enim, si existimas nobiscum vitia nasci; supervenerunt, ingesta sunt. Itaque monitionibus crebris opiniones, quae nos circumsonant, repellantur. Nulli nos vitio natura conciliat; illa1 integros ac liberos genuit. Nihil quo avaritiam nostram inritaret, posuit in aperto.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 94.55-56.

Seneca succeeds in stirring the audience's mind to provoke curiosity and philosophical inquiry through the tragic negative examples of the anti-heroes in his plays. It is evident that he deems negative examples to have influential power as well, and therefore one should be careful about what is placed in front of their eyes:

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externals, do not make it your wish to give the appearance of knowing anything. Epictetus, *Ἐγχειρίδιον* 13. All translations of Epictetus's *Ἐγχειρίδιον* are drawn from Oldfather 1989). For Stoic curiosity, see Beagon 2011; Brennan 2005.

[373] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 7.25: *Contenti simus inventis; aliquid veritati et posteri conferant.* (Let us be satisfied with what we have found out, and let our descendants also contribute something to the truth. *Naturales Quaestiones* 7.25.7);

[374] Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 7.25.5: *Harum quinque stellarum quae se ingerunt nobis, quae alio atque alio occurrentes loco curiosos nos esse cogunt.* ('The five planets force themselves upon our attention. Occurring in one place or another they compel us to be curious'.).

[375] See also Beagon 2011, p. 72.

[376] Beagon 2011, p. 73.

Age, ne hoc quidem intellegitis, mala exempla in eos redundare, qui faciunt? Agite dis inmortalibus gratias, quod eum docetis esse crudelem, qui non potest discere.

Seneca, *Epistles* 7.5-6.

Seneca, when commenting on the violent spectacles of gladiators in the arena, addresses the brutalised spectators.[377] They are responsible for what they allow themselves to attend and see, since even a bad example is able to teach, form certain attitudes and provoke emotional reactions. In contrast to the games in the arena, Seneca's plays are negative examples, which will stir the audience's curiosity, as Nature does, and they will reveal the hidden nature of the destructive passions through various rhetorical devices such as the function of the Chorus and several minor characters in the plays.

It is crucial to consider the audience's expectations, as they are the primary beneficiaries of the plays' intended impact. In *Epistle* 108, Seneca mentions that the audience, being human, naturally inclines toward virtue and goodness and applauds the generally accepted statements that are recognised as truths by the majority of people.[378] He also supports that even the most morally repugnant criminal is likely to be moved and applaud a statement which condemns his actions (*Epistles* 108.9.). Therefore, beneficial precepts can permeate even the least prepared audience.[379] To strengthen his argument, Seneca quotes Cleanthes' analogy between theoretical observation expressed through poetry (*Sic sensus nostros clariores carminis arta necessitas efficit*, *Epistles* 108.10) and the trumpet that spreads its sound, amplifying the air (*Clariorem sonum reddit*, *Epistles* 108.10). The powerful metre can influence and move the mind (*Magis tamen feriuntur animi cum carmina*, *Epistles* 108.11) and incite the audience towards the truth (*Ad confessionem ueritatis adducimur*, *Epistles* 108.12). In addition, in the discussion about the potential of eloquence towards goodness (*Talis oratio* [...] *tota in bonum* [...] *uolta*, *Epistles* 108.12), Seneca infers that it is much easier to educate the young in this manner because they are the most malleable and adaptable (*Facillime enim tenera conciliantur ingenia*, *Epistles* 108.12). Therefore, not only did Seneca employ poetry for its didactic function, but he also used his tragedies to train people, toward virtue and morality.

Seneca also provides an example of the audience's reaction when their expectations of the play are not met (*Epistles* 115.14-15). Seneca admits that tragedy is likely to encompass verses which glorify vice, wealth (*Epistles* 115.14), and he gives an example when the audience, after listening to such verses, was about to drive the actor away, but Euripides jumped up on the stage and begged the audience to pause and wait to see what the

[377] Gummere 1917, p. 33, fn. a.
[378] Seneca, *Epistles* 108.8: *omnibus enim natura fundamenta dedit semenque uirtutum; Epistles* 108.8: *Non uides quemadmodum theatra consonent quotiens aliqua dicta sunt quae publice adgnoscimus et consensu uera esse testamur?*
[379] Seneca, *Epistles* 108.9: *cum salutaribus praeceptis* […]*uersus inseruntur, efficacius eadem illa demissuri in animum inperitorum.* Seneca quotes a verse on greed drawn by the poet Publilius Syrus, who is also praised in *Epistles* 8.8. Fantham supports that he wrote many moral sayings that were employed for educational purposes, Fantham 2016, p. 279.

fate holds for the wicked person (meaning the admired of gold) since justice would be attributed as it happens with every individual:

> *Cum hi nouissimi uersus in tragoedia Euripidis pronuntiati essent, totus populus ad eiciendum et actorem et carmen consurrexit uno impetu, donec Euripides in medium ipse prosiliuit petens ut expectarent uiderentque quem admirator auri exitum faceret. Dabat in illa fabula poenas Bellerophontes quas in sua quisque dat.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 115.15-16.

It seems that even if a play seemed to praise a Stoic vice, it still taught the audience a lesson. The latter had to wait until the end to find out what happened in the plot and how justice was served. In a way, the audience had the task of waiting and resisting the apparent message of the tragedy.[380] This is not a task for a passive audience; it requires the spectators to have an active role and apply a Stoic principle; the wise person always pauses before giving her assent to an external impression. The audience needs to make a pause to estimate whether they confirm a true judgment; otherwise, if they assent to a false judgment, a passion will appear. Therefore, Seneca already offers a manner in which his audience needs to be trained to react; they need to learn to wait so that they evaluate their mental processes justly unless they develop disastrous passions:

> *Nemo enim resistit sibi, cum coepit inpelli, nec timorem suum redigit ad verum. Nemo dicit: "Vanus auctor est, vanus haec aut finxit aut credidit." Damus nos aurae ferendos. Expavescimus dubia pro certis. Non servamus modum rerum. Statim in timorem vertit3 scrupulus.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 13.13-14.

A key point in Seneca's tragedy is that he, as an author, does not express opposing opinions explicitly, whereas in his prose, he often employs an interlocutor for this purpose (*De Beneficiis* 4.8.2; *De Brevitate Vitae* 1.1-17; *Epistles* 24; 27). Felicio observes[381] that Seneca's tragedies do not consistently follow a certain Stoic philosophical attitude, which is compatible with Seneca's belief that the poets do not intend to inform the audience philosophically, nor do they necessarily aspire to specific philosophical views.[382] Therefore, he disapproves of those calling Homer a Stoic.[383] In his plays, he leaves his tragic characters to display their various views, which are necessarily influenced by their state of mind or perspective. The dialectical nature of this practice, the polyvalent use of language and the presentation of themes evident in the independent viewpoints of the chorus and the characters lead to tragic tension, which gives the audience the chance to

[380] Felicio 2023, p. 319.
[381] Felicio 2023, p. 316.
[382] Seneca, *Epistles* 88.5: *Apparet nihil horum esse in illo, quia omnia sunt; ista enim inter se dissidente.*
[383] Long 2019, pp. 41-66.

examine the play from different voices and perspectives. Therefore, the confusion provoked forces the audience to question their impressions and beliefs.[384] Vernant and Vidal-Naquet[385] comment astutely that 'the tragic message, when understood, is precisely that there are zones of opacity and incommunicability in the words that men exchange. Even as he sees the protagonists clinging exclusively to one meaning and, thus blinded, tearing themselves apart or destroying themselves, the spectator must understand that there are really two or more possible meanings.' A characteristic example would be the different views of the characters in *Oedipus*: the ghost of Laius regards Oedipus as responsible for the misfortunes in Thebes (*non ira deum, sed scelere, Oedipus* 630-631), whereas the chorus attributes all the ills to 'the ancient wrath of the gods'[386] (*veteres deum/irae, Oedipus* 711-712). This polyvalence is a distinct property of drama which does not have a single narrator. There is a play, an exchange, between the concepts of *ira* and *scelus*; Oedipus concludes that his punishment, meaning his blindness, which was caused partly by his *ira* (*iratus*, *Oedipus* 959), would bring atonement (*scelera donat*, *Oedipus* 1001).[387]

Moreover, how can Seneca's drama be considered Stoic when characters express a variety of views and perspectives, not all of which are Stoic, and characters who embody or express Stoic ideals seem to be weak and falter? The chorus could perhaps give the solution, as it often expresses a Stoic point of view; for instance, in *Medea*, the chorus was not sympathetic to the tragic heroine. The chorus also mentions various mainstream Stoic theories, but they seem to be impossible in real life, as if they existed only in a dream.[388] In addition, they are often employed for vicious or irrational purposes, like in *Phaedra* and in *Oedipus* (*Phaedra* 267-273, 481, 567-568; *Oedipus* 980). A crucial debate is the one between *Ratio* and *Furor,* which are very often juxtaposed.[389] Since the tragic world is Stoic in reverse, the actual Stoic figures are presented as weak and defeated on purpose to indicate what happens when passion conquers reason; Thyestes does not apply moderation to his thought or actions (*Thyestes* 403-545), Hippolytus' daydreaming is interrupted and infused by his aversion to women (*Phaedra* 483-563) and Hercules is torn between his father's pleading and his own wish for self-destruction (*Hercules Furens* 1321-1341). However, later on, an analysis of various tragedies' choruses will show that their role is to create an alienation effect and show the audience how to approach the plot, meaning that they need to examine and test the content; therefore, how to be an active audience.[390]

One of the most important questions is how the tragic character's reactions influence the reactions of the audience. Nussbaum[391] and Wray[392] support that throughout the plays, there are certain points which enhance and promote a reaction conducive to Stoic *proficiens* and ethical progress in only Stoic spectators. However,

[384] Trinacty 2015, p. 31.
[385] Vernant & Vidal-Naquet 1990, p. 43.
[386] All translations of Seneca's *Oedipus* are drawn from Fitch 2018.
[387] Trinacty 2015, p. 31.
[388] Trinacty 2015, p. 36.
[389] Schiesaro 2009, p. 226.
[390] On the function of Seneca's Chorus, see pp. 93-110 in the current chapter.
[391] Nussbaum 1993.
[392] Wray 2009.

Schiesaro[393] and Mowbray[394] disagree with this reading. On the other hand, Trinacty argues that of all the interpretations presented in the tragedies, Stoicism is only one lens for exploring the plays and is therefore 'only one of the many keys' one can use to find a meaning of the play.[395] Nevertheless, Seneca has indeed an additional mission for the tragedy and the audience, meaning that, as Staley and Gill show, the passions are to be condemned by the audience, which needs to be persuaded to recognise[396] the evil nature of their passionate decisions through the dialectic and demonstrative character of Senecan drama. However, poetry does not ethically educate the audience by eliminating their passions, but by altering the passions of their soul.[397]

The audience watches and participates in the trial between Reason and Passion, and is called upon to form a judgment alongside the tragic characters. Their emotional responses are Stoic, in the sense that they are both emotional and cognitive, characterised by a conceptual content. Seneca's tragic structure elicits exactly this cognitive reaction; the audience continuously needs to speculate on the validity and truth of the characters' opinions, thereby reflecting on and examining their own minds and sets of values. Furthermore, Seneca stresses the need to play a role in life and to imagine that a Stoic sage is constantly watching us, a kind of an *askesis (*Seneca, *Epistles* 2.8-10) and in his *De Ira* argues that to prevent anger, one needs to apply the exercise of constantly picturing the anger's faults and judging it, and he also presents[398] different perspectives on judgeship.[399] The stage, as the soul, is like a court where the characters express different voices that are to be judged by their audience and their fellow tragic characters. Furthermore, the passionate judgments are to be seen and condemned by both the internal characters and the audience (*De Ira* 1.104; 1.5.1; 2.1.1; 2.1.3; 2.5.1). In contrast to the audience's examination of the causes of the passions, the failure of the tragic characters to do so leads to catastrophe.

Whether or not they are Stoics, the audience is forced to see that through the dialectic play between points of view, through the trial happening both on stage and in characters' and their soul, individuals are responsible for their tragic actions and the resulting tragic consequences; these were not merely mistakes or provoked by the gods' wrath. The culprit was their own bad values and judgments, and their indulgence of their

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[393] Schiesaro 2003.
[394] Mowbray 2012.
[395] Trinacty 2015, p. 38.
[396] Staley 2010, p. 94; Gill 2006, p. 435.
[397] Nussbaum 1993, p. 98.
[398] Seneca, *De Ira* 1.18.1-2; 2.29.3. Seneca, *De Ira* 1.18.2: *Ratio nil praeter ipsum de quo agitur spectat; ira vanis et extra causam obversantibus commovetur […] saepe infesta patrono reum damnat; etiam si ingeritur oculis veritas, amat et tuetur errorem*; *coargui non vult et in male coeptis honestior illi pertinacia videtur quam paenitentia.* ('Reason considers nothing except the question at issue; anger is moved by trifling things that lie outside the case. […] Many times it will condemn the accused because it hates his lawyer; even if the truth is piled up before its very eyes, it loves error and clings to it; it refuses to be convinced, and having entered upon wrong it counts persistence to be more honourable than penitence.').
[399] Staley 2010, p. 154, n. 28. Seneca presents Reason and Passion as personifications of persons with judicial roles in the court, who try to find the truth. According to Epictetus, *Ἐγχειρίδιον* 20 and his *Διατριβαί,* 2.19.32, the Stoic concept of προαίρεσις is a moral choice, one's ability to choose good over evil and judge their impressions (φαντασίαι). Seneca's representation in *De Ira* 1.18.1-2 is an illustrative way to show how one's rational faculty works and how differently right reason and passions 'judge' the impressions one forms after receiving an external stimulus. Seneca juxtaposes anger and one's rational mechanism for reaching a moral choice, presenting them as figures in court to show that anger is not a trustworthy basis for making decisions. See Eden 1986, pp. 102, 96 on reason personified as the judge and anger personified as a juror.

impulses.[400] Additionally, the irrational, disastrous and tragic deeds around which the whole plot revolves can be obvious, if not due to common logic, due to the shocking illustrations of them by Seneca. The vicarious emotional experience of the images of disgust and terror has the objective of scaring away the audience from such mental events. Therefore, the process which gives birth to evil actions needs to be condemned; the passions need to be extirpated. However, a mere demonstration, although powerful, does not always guarantee a philosophical inquiry by the audience or readers of the plays. The following section analyses the role of the chorus as a model of an active audience that tests the characters' actions and creates an alienation effect, which provides the necessary detachment and prevents identification with the tragic heroes. Therefore, the audience is free from unnecessary distractions, allowing their curiosity to be stirred towards ethical matters.

The Role of the Chorus in Senecan Tragedy

The Senecan chorus has not appealed to scholars as much as one might have expected. Indeed, the main tendency of traditional discussion of Senecan drama has been that his tragedies did not follow an appropriate set of rules for the genre, leading some to suggest that the plays might not have been Seneca's or that the choruses were a failed imitation of the Greek tragic choruses. Rosenmeyer was the first to challenge this view, along with its concomitant conclusion that Senecan poetry was unrelated to Stoicism because the former does not depict a Stoic *sapiens*, but his inverse, such as Atreus in *Thyestes*. He observed that the maxims of the choruses reveal their disapproval and aversion towards the main characters of the play, and, therefore, he promoted the notion of the anti-hero.[401]

Senecan tragedy has a two-fold impact on the audience; the main action of the plays provokes an emotional response, which, however, is only a first movement and can be used pedagogically by the audience so that they are morally improved. The question of how the audience can use their emotional response before it develops into a full passion through wrong judgment leads to the second phase of the drama's influence, the active and inquiring participation in the play, which is the chorus's responsibility to facilitate. The chorus functions as a model of spectatorship, not only providing emotional distance and detachment from the excessive emotional state in which the protagonists are, but also as guides to a philosophical approach to the characters' attitudes. Choruses in Senecan drama usually do not look favourably on the tragic heroes and, not only do they keep their distance from them, but they also criticise them and, more often than not, express Stoic positions on passions that overwhelm the heroes, through *praecepta*. The goal of this section is to demonstrate the instances when the chorus shows the audience what stance to take when confronted with the excessive passion of the maddened characters.

The view that a work of art might emotionally move the audience, which is beneficial to the latter, has been rejected by older scholars.[402] However, the Senecan audience is engaged by the drama in an intellectual

[400] Staley 2010, p. 94.
[401] Rosenmeyer 1989, pp. 89-90, 31-36.
[402] Regenbogen 1927, p. 168; Knoche 1941 (in Lefevre ed. 1972, p. 60); Hine 2000.

way, as according to Stoic ethics and aesthetics, one should examine what he sees and thinks.[403] The chorus's commentaries on the characters' actions and passions render the real audience active participants who reject or assent to the maxims and *sententiae*;[404] they challenge the audience's first emotional reaction, the first movement- and engage them to critically analyse it, guiding them through Stoic precepts. It seems that the chorus functions as an intervention which operates with the aid of tragic irony or philosophical detachment.[405]

Furthermore, Seneca's use of the Chorus as not simply a theatrical device is confirmed in his philosophical prose. Many voices combine the chorus: *Non vides, quam multorum vocibus chorus constet?* ('Do you not see how many voices there are in a chorus?' *Epistles* 84.9). Chorus members are not important only in number but also in variety; they have different roles or genders (*Epistles* 84.9-10), and the individual singer is hidden but the audience can hear them all together (*Singulorum illic latent voces, omnium apparent*. *Epistles* 84.10). The result of many different instruments is harmony: *fit concentus ex dissonis* ('and yet from the discordant sounds a harmony is produced'. *Epistles* 84.10). For Seneca, the mind works and should work as the Chorus:

> *Talem animum nostrum esse volo; multae in illo artes, multa praecepta sint, multarum aetatum exempla, sed in unum conspirata. "Quomodo," inquis, "hoc effici poterit?" Adsidua intentione; si nihil egerimus nisi ratione suadente.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 84.10-11.

Therefore, the Chorus is the advocate who harmoniously combines many precepts in one single voice against what seems to be fortunate:

> *Necessarium itaque admoneri est, habere aliquem advocatum bonae mentis et in tanto fremitu tumultuque falsorum unam denique audire vocem. Quae erit illa vox? Ea scilicet, quae tibi tantis clamoribus ambitionis exsurdato salubria insusurret verba, quae dicat: non est quod invideas istis, quos magnos felicesque populus vocat, non est quod tibi compositae mentis habitum et sanitatem plausus excutiat, non est quod tibi tranquillitatis tuae fastidium faciat ille sub illis fascibus purpura cultus, non est quod feliciorem eum iudices cui summovetur, quam te quem1 lictor semita deicit. Si vis exercere tibi utile, nulli autem grave imperium, summove vitia.*
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> Seneca, *Epistles* 94.59-61.

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[403] Stevens 1992, p. 139.
[404] Stevens 1992, pp. 178-186. Stevens, in his analysis of the Chorus in *Hercules Furens*, argues for a wishful ignorance of the Chorus, which makes the audience actively participate by judging the play and wonder whether they agree with the position of the chorus.
[405] Hill 2000, p. 587. Hill compares ancient tragedy to opera, which is the closest to the ancient tragedy form of art that exists nowadays.

Seneca stresses the function of the mind to distinguish between true virtues and *indifferentia,* as the Chorus does in his tragedies:

> *Hanc si audire volueris, dicet tibi: relinque ista iamdudum, ad quae discurritur. Relinque divitias, aut periculum possidentium aut onus. Relinque corporis atque animi voluptates; molliunt et enervant.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 84.11.

Seneca lists some pursuits which distract man and torment them, whereas they have no true value: *ventosa, nullum habet terminum* ('empty thing, a thing that has no goal', *Epistles* 84.11). Wealth and power are also *indifferentia*. Seneca explains how rich men's houses are on slippery ground (*in lubrico*, *Epistles* 84.12). On the contrary, one should direct their course to wisdom and not let oneself be guiled by *Fortuna*'s gifts, which are *indifferentia*: *Huc potius te ad sapientiam derige tranquillissimasque res eius et simul amplissimas pete.* ('Instead of this, direct your course hither to wisdom, and seek her ways, which are ways of surpassing peace and plenty.' *Epistles* 84.12-13). Seneca directs men away from *Fortuna* in order to achieve greatness (*Epistles* 84.13). Hence, for Seneca, the Chorus functions as the mind which is responsible for distinguishing and choosing between *indifferentia* and virtues, especially when recognising the symptoms of passions,[406] as shown earlier in Chapter 1. In what follows, I will offer some analysis of the plays as case studies to show how the Senecan Chorus functions towards conveying a Stoic message to the audience.

Phaedra

In the case of *Phaedra*, the main passion is love, which turns into madness (*furor*). The first chorus at lines 274-357 comments on the passion of romantic love, which Cupid brings upon men, gods, and creatures; no one is safe in front of the fierce power of love, and even anger can change its form and become *amor* (*Vindicat omnes natura sibi, | nihil immune est, | odiumque perit, cum iussit amor; | veteres cedunt ignibus irae. Phaedra* 352-355); However, the chorus does not celebrate the passion of love, but it rather warns the audience against it:

> *Diva non miti generata ponto,*
> *quam vocat matrem geminus Cupido*
> *impotens flammis simul et sagittis:*
> *iste lascivus puer ac renidens*
> *tela quam certo moderatur arcu!*
> *[labitur totas furor in medullas*

[406] The Nurse in *Medea* recognises the hallmarks of her mistress's frenzied state on her face before Medea commits her crime (*irae novimus veteris notas*, *Medea* 394; *vultum Furoris cerno*, *Medea* 396).

igne furtivo populante venas][407]
non habet latam data plaga frontem,
sed vorat tectas penitus medullas.

Seneca, *Phaedra* 274-357.

Seneca has given to the passion of love presented as a blow from Cupid, and there are characteristics of destruction and madness, which, as 'stealthy fire', damages one silently and 'deep into the hidden marrow'. The Chorus points out the dangers of love, which although not obvious, have a catastrophic impact, and if one indulges in it continuously, they are driven to madness, as the second chorus shows. Interestingly enough, the destructive description of love comes after the failed attempts of the nurse to reason with Phaedra (*Phaedra* 129-273). The chorus's warning indicates the possibility for Phaedra to think in an appropriate manner and not give her assent to false reason; therefore, in the Senecan threefold set of stages of passion, Phaedra still has time to withhold her assent to the false judgment and not let her passion take over. However, as the plot unfolds, it is already late as her passion has already developed.

At the end of the second act, the chorus expresses another Stoic tenet commending Hippolytus's behaviour; his beauty made him vain and disdainful, which was a moral mistake due to the wrong estimation of it. The chorus gives Seneca's thought on it, and he also gives examples of beautiful objects or entities whose beauty fades at the passing of time (761-776): *Anceps forma bonum mortalibus,* | *exigui donum breve temporis,* | *ut velox celeri pede laberis!* ('Beauty—a doubtful boon for mortals, a brief and short-lived gift, how fleeting, how swiftly passing!' *Phaedra* 765-767). Beauty's worth is indeed questionable since it belongs to the preferred indifferents, which might benefit one, but they can also cause trouble and moral failure if taken to be intrinsically valued. In either case, beauty is "fleeting" since *Fortuna* and change are responsible for every indifferent; hence, it is easy to lose. Whoever depends on beauty for their happiness would be a fool. Another minor observation would be that at the end of their speech, the chorus once again warns the audience against a potential danger, using also irony at the very last lines; *Raris forma viris (saecula perspice)* | *impunita fuit. te melior dues* | *tutum praetereat, formaque nobilis* | *deformis senii monstret imaginem*. ('Beauty in men is rarely unpunished: scan the ages. May a kindlier god leave you in safety, and your famous beauty show the stamp of unbeautiful old age.' *Phaedra* 820-823). An interesting correlation can occur between the phrase *saecula perspice* in *Phaedra* 820 and the phrase *Computa urbium saecula* in *De Consolatione ad Marciam* 21.1.[408] In both passages, Seneca comments

[407] In Fitch 2018, lines 279-280 were deleted but here there are included because they showcase the development of the passion of love into madness (*furor*).
[408] Seneca, *De Consolatione ad Marciam* 21.1-2: *"Nimis tamen cito perît et immaturus." Primum puta illi superfuisse—comprende quantum plurimum procedere homini licet: quantum est? Ad brevissimum tempus editi, cito cessuri loco venienti in pactum1 hoc prospicimus hospitium. De nostris aetatibus loquor, quas incredibili celeritate aevum volvit? Computa urbium saecula; videbis quam non diu steterint etiam quae vetustate gloriantur. Omnia humana brevia et caduca sunt et infiniti temporis nullam partem occupantia.* ('"Yet," you say, "he perished too soon and before his time." In the first place, suppose he had survived—grant him the very longest life a man can have—how many years are there after all? Born as we are for the briefest space, and destined soon to yield place to another coming into his lease of time, we view our life as a sojourn at an inn. "Our" life do I say, when Time hurries it on with such incredible swiftness? Count the centuries of cities;

on the brevity of *indifferentia*[409] such as beauty and age. Chorus expresses what Seneca believes about worrying about things which we cannot control. Beauty is in the hands of gods who envy it (*Phaedra* 820-823) and it reflects on one's age (*Phaedra* 823). However, age is also at the hands of Time's 'swiftness' and is not really ours (*De nostris aetatibus loquor, quas incredibili celeritate aevum volvit? De Consolatione ad Ad Marciam* 21.1). Seneca and Chorus's advice is the same: *saecula perspice* (*Phaedra* 820) and *Computa urbium saecula (*'Count the centuries of cities,' *De Consolatione ad Marciam* 21.1). Counting the time proves brevity of human things (*videbis quam non diu steterint etiam quae vetustate gloriantur, De Consolatione ad Ad Marciam* 21.1-2). Gods and Chance are in control of age and beauty which always come to an end since all human things are 'short-lived and perishable' (*Omnia humana brevia et caduca sunt, De Consolatione ad Marciam* 21.1-2). Therefore, one should not worry much about things with no intrinsic value. Philosophical integrity of the tragedies is also established since Seneca's voice aligns with the Chorus's, providing more evidence that the Chorus is a philosophical tool towards moral improvement.

Later on in the third act, Phaedra's love has already turned into madness, and she is cunningly preparing to accuse Hippolytus's actions for her desire to commit suicide when Theseus returns from the undead. The chorus gives the audience a deranged image of a hysterical and manipulative Phaedra:

> *Quid sinat inausum feminae praeceps furor?*
> *nefanda iuveni crimina insonti apparat.*
> *en scelera! quaerit crine lacerato fidem,*
> *decus omne turbat capitis, umectat genas:*
> *instruitur omni fraude feminea dolus.*
>
> Seneca, *Phaedra* 824-828.

The Chorus take a stance and expresses their opinion. They are not favourable or approving towards Phaedra, and they are not convinced by her fragile state; although weak and overwhelmed, there is a malicious intention hidden, which is immoral. It stems from Phaedra's madness caused by her repetitive indulgence in her passions, which has left a permanent scar on her personality. Hence, now the mistaken reason governs her mind, and she proceeds to irrational decisions, such as unjustly accusing Hippolytus and vicariously causing his death.

Furthermore, at the end of the third act, the Chorus enhances their position on indifferents and the fate of men, which is influenced by Fortuna; men are deceived (by their own mistake) by Fortuna, whereas Nature does not harm them since there is only moral evil growing in the minds of people:

> *sed cur idem qui tanta regis,*
> *sub quo vasti pondera mundi*

---

you will see how even those that boast of their great age have not existed long. All things human are short-lived and perishable, and fill no part at all of infinite time.').

[409] For beauty as *indifferentium* and Seneca's Chorus in relation to *Fortuna*, see Chapter 5, p. 251.

librata suos ducunt orbes,
hominum nimium securus abes,
non sollicitus prodesse bonis,
nocuisse malis?[410]
Res humanas ordine nullo
Fortuna regit
sparsitque manu munera caeca
peiora fovens.

Seneca, *Phaedra* 972-980.

The theme of Fortuna and her erratic lack of order is again mentioned by the chorus at the end of the fourth act (1123-1153). Furthermore, the chorus mentions that Fortuna blows in a lesser grade the lowly and the weak (1123-1140), and they specifically emphasise that great evils befall the kings rather than the humble; *non capit umquam magnos motus | humilis tecti plebeia domus; | circa regna tonat.* Great upheavals are never felt by a commoner's house with its lowly roof; but around thrones it thunders. *Phaedra* 1138-1140). However, the above line does not indicate that misfortunes target only the kingly because it is immediately followed that Fortune does not promise anything to anyone; *Volat ambiguis mobilis alis | hora, nec ulli | praestat velox Fortuna fidem.* (The shifting hour flies on inconstant wings, and fleeting Fortune pledges her faith to none. *Phaedra* 1141-1143).

The analysis of the Chorus in *Phaedra* indicates that they were active participants while observing and commenting on the characters' attitudes and beliefs, criticizing them for their ill reason. Thus, they easily influenced the audience, providing them a model to mimic, whereas the emotional intensity and ugliness caused by the triumph of vice in the main plot would have an apotropaic function, scaring the audience away from similar behaviours. Furthermore, it is important to say that Seneca emphasized mainly three points through the choruses in Phaedra; first, the chorus warned against the destructive power of love as long as its cure was feasible; secondly, the appearance of the maddened Phaedra at the beginning of the third act also drew the chorus's attention; she was now completely overwhelmed by her passions and her insanity led her to irrational and vicious actions. The chorus seems terrified of the luring danger behind her mental state, but has ceased their warnings or suggestions of preventing the vice from happening; Phaedra has reached the third Senecan step of passion, which is irreversible (*Epistles* 75.11-14). Therefore, it is a futile attempt to stop the insane hero from her irrational deed. In addition, the chorus gives an explanation not only of why the irrational action took place, which was the predominance of passion in the heroes' souls, but also why the emotional overwhelming happened; the reason was that the heroes placed high value on indifferents and externals, which only *Fortuna* is able to control. Therefore, the heroes were bound to be unhappy since they based their happiness on something as fickle as Fortuna. Therefore, the chorus follows a critical reading of the characters' psychosynthesis and actions, it takes

[410] In Wilson 2010, p. 29, Wilson translates lines 976-977 as following: "How can you forget to bless us or even to do us harm?" I prefer Wilson's translation because it reveals the Stoic tenet that there is no natural evil; only moral evil.

a stance and adheres to Stoic principles and more specifically to Seneca's psychology and account of passions.

Medea

In Medea, the chorus obviously does not like the heroine; at the very start of the play (*Medea* 56-115), the chorus ironically celebrates the upcoming wedding, which causes Medea a great deal of turmoil. At the end of the first act, just before Medea conceives the heinous idea of killing her children, the chorus dismissively talks about her; *tacitis eat illa tenebris, | si qua peregrino nubit fugitiva marito.* (and let any runaway girl who weds with a foreign husband pass in silent darkness. *Medea* 114-115). The chorus disapproves of Medea's behaviour towards her family, whom she abandoned; she is also considered to be a foreigner. Furthermore, the chorus metaphorically prompts Jason to let her go into the darkness, and marry Creousa. They are blatantly biased against Medea; it is no wonder, though, since her murderous reputation precedes her. Nevertheless, the chorus is responsible for the detachment and the prevention of an experience of emotional identification or pity for Medea.

At the end of the second act (301-379), Creon has just permitted a slightly longer stay to Medea, and he is heading to the wedding preparations and rites. The chorus, however, does not seem to celebrate anymore but foresees a sudden change and danger instead. In lines 301-360, the chorus describes some of the Argonauts' adventures and almost impossible tasks and comments on the fragility of the boat and the faith in something fickle:

Audax nimium qui freta primus
rate tam fragili perfida rupit,
terrasque suas post terga videns
animam levibus credidit auris,
dubioque secans aequora cursu
potuit tenui fidere lingo.[411]

Seneca, *Medea* 301-306.

The chorus characterises this kind of behaviour – trusting in unsure factors- as daring (*audax, Medea* 301). They again guide the audience to see through Creon's reasoning; he made a terrible mistake trusting Medea, who is unreliable like the fragile boat (302), the fickle breezes (304) and the unsure course (305). Indeed, the chorus commends on the worthiness of such a dangerous trip:

Quod fuit huius pretium cursus?
aurea pellis
maiusque mari Medea malum,

[411] Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Seneca's *Medea* can be drawn from Fitch 2018.

merces prima digna carina.

Seneca, *Medea* 361-364.

Here, Medea is portrayed as evil, worse than the sea (*maiusque mari Medea malum*, 363), which entailed so many great dangers. It is not worth trusting one's life in Fortuna and the unpredictable course she takes; similarly, the chorus makes obvious by analogy that Creon should not have trusted Medea and allowed her to stay longer in Corinth, as she is about to bring great misfortune on his kingdom.

At the end of the third act, Jason and Medea have exchanged their points of view, and Medea is left filled with anger and thirst for revenge (*Medea* 560-578). The chorus (579-669), once again, has ceased their warning for future misfortunes now that Medea has already given her assent to her fatal passion; now her madness takes over and drags everyone along in its passing, according to the third step of Seneca's psychological causation of passions:

Nulla vis flammae tumidive venti
tanta, nec teli metuenda torti,
quanta cum coniunx viduata taedis
ardet et odit.

Seneca, *Medea* 579-582.

The chorus is unfavourable to Medea, who is presented as rejected, hateful, violent and overwhelmed with passion. She is stronger and worse than other evils, natural or human (such as winds or spears; also, Seneca compares her with natural forces in the next lines 583-590) and she cannot be controlled or stopped:

Caecus est ignis stimulatus ira
nec regi curat patiturve frenos
aut timet mortem; cupit ire in ipsos
obvius enses.

Seneca, *Medea* 591-594.

Ira has blinded Medea and she will not stop. Chorus's remark reflects Seneca's *De Ira* when he comments on the blind force and destructiveness of anger. Medea is not to be trusted and now the chorus makes it clear; they compare Medea to the ocean foreboding the disaster; *Exigit poenas mare provocatum*. (The sea exacts punishment for their challenge. *Medea* 616). There is a parallel between the Argonauts' challenging behaviour against the fickle sea and Jason's reckless attitude towards Medea. She, similarly to the sea, is bound to punish those who did her wrong, meaning Jason. The chorus makes a list of the Argonauts who met their inauspicious fate (607-669) because they disturbed and violently broke the holy bonds of the cosmic order in antithesis to the one following a safe path; *constitit nulli via nota magno:* | *vade qua tutum populo priori,* | *rumpe nec sacro*

violente sancta | foedera mundi. Medea 603-606). Jason's behaviour is similar to the Argonauts' challenging behaviour and Phaethon's attitude, who did not pay heed to his father, the Sun, and fatally drove his chariots (599-602). However, despite his recklessness, the chorus feels sympathetic for Jason against Medea:

> *Parcite, o divi, veniam precamur,*
> *vivat ut tutus mare qui subegit.*
> *sed furit vinci dominus profundi*
> *regna secunda.*
>
> Seneca, *Medea* 595-598.

The chorus begs the gods to forgive Jason's rash behaviour and take his side; after enumerating the victims of Argo, they exclaim their exasperation; *Iam satis, divi, mare vindicastis: | parcite iusso.* (Enough reparations, you gods, for the sea: spare one under orders. *Medea* 668-669). It is clear then that the chorus guides the audience to think deeper on the cause of vice depicted in the play, even if they do not agree on Jason's guilt or innocence or Medea's absolute blame. Why, of all the Argonauts who got punished for their hubris, should Jason be the one to escape his fate? Why should one not take into consideration Medea's unfortunate position as well? The answers to these questions are not as important as the procedure of the audience posing the questions.

In the fourth act (670-848), the magic ritual takes place, and Medea prepares her lethal mixture. The nurse reveals her mistress's mental state, whose bitterness has grown in a monstrous manner renewing its own flames and violence, and therefore, the nurse foresees the great evil afoot (*Pavet animus, horret: magna pernicies adest.immane quantum augescit et semet doloraccendit ipse vimque praeteritam integrat. Medea* 670-672) emphasising that Medea's rage and vicious monstrosity are worse now in comparison with older schemes and evil deeds of hers (*vidi furentem saepe et aggressam deos, | caelum trahentem: maius his, maius parat | Medea monstrum. Medea* 673-675). *Ira* has further developed into monstrous insanity; it is too late to prevent it with the aid of reasoning. The irreversibility of Medea's state is indicated by the lack of warnings and maxims on virtuous life, the unpredictability of Fortuna and the moral mistakes of humans expressed by the chorus. They only ask some clarifying questions to the messenger of the bad news at the beginning of the fifth act (879-890). Although seemingly of minor importance, these questions asked after the tragic action is realised play an important role in guiding the audience's thoughts towards the direction to explain and think about how and why vice triumphed in the end; *Qua fraude capti?* (How were they trapped? *Medea* 881); *In illis esse quis potuit dolus?* (What trickery could have been in them? *Medea* 882); *Quis cladis modus?* (What is the extent of the disaster? *Medea* 884). The extent of the disaster is also important, the flames of which are unquenchable, thus aptly illustrating the Senecan view of anger, which turns into madness and does not cease, only gets more and more destructive.

Thyestes

Thyestes starts with a dialogue between the ghost of Tantalus and *Furia*. Tantalus does not wish to cause further harm (86-95) and in front of Furia's plans, he wishes to return to his suffering eternally reaching for food and water (68-83). However, Furia is relentless; *Ante perturba domum,* | *inferque tecum proelia et ferri malum* | *regibus amorem; concute insano ferum* | *pectus tumultu.* ('First, disorder this house; with your coming instill battles and the evil love of the sword in its kings; rouse their fierce hearts to mad turmoil.' *Thyestes* 83-86).[412] Furia's thirst for madness and evil is so great that even Tantalus cannot bear it despite his previous crimes. She is determined to spread a monstrous frenzy into the house of Atreus (*Thyestes* 101-121). The play begins with a rather terrifying prospect of upcoming evil, which is far greater than previous ones (*inveni dapes* | *quas ipse fugeres*. I have found a dinner that even you would run from. *Thyestes* 65-66). Indeed, a bit later, Atreus looks up to Tantalus and Pelops so that his actions follow their examples (*Tantalum et Pelopem aspice;* | *ad haec manus exempla poscuntur meae. Thyestes* 242-243). The effort to commit a greater evil indicates a kind of mastery in vice, and it is a reminder of Medea's attempt to find a crime matching her age and experience compared to the deeds to which she was accustomed when she was a girl. Therefore, Atreus here follows the morally wrong *exempla* for his development.

The purpose of such an introduction to the tragedy is to prepare and scare the audience for the size of the evil to come. It is not in its initial state when passion starts forming; madness has already befallen the diseased house of Atreus, leaving a permanent scar (*De Ira*, 1.16.7). According to Seneca's *De Ira*, 1.8.1-3 and 2.4.2, there is no reasoning adequate to cease the madness at this stage, a view which is manifested in the chorus's pleading to the gods instead of its tempered and scornful warnings;

> *advertat placidum numen et arceat,*
> *alternae scelerum ne redeant vices*
> *nec succedat avo deterior nepos*
> *et maior placeat culpa minoribus.*
> *Tandem lassa feros exuat impetus*
> *sicci progenies impia Tantali.*
> *peccatum satis est! fas valuit nihil*
> *aut commune nefas.*
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 132-139.

In the passage above, the chorus expresses its terror for the empeding evil, and immediately afterwards it shows its exasperation on iniquity; *fas* does no good and neither does collective *nefas*. Nature, divine order and laws are not listening; they are not to help. Collective wrong has only worse consequences. The chorus desires for

[412] Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Seneca's *Thyestes* are drawn from Fitch 2018.

this cycle of catastrophe and evil to cease but realises that the gods will not help them.

During the second act, Atreus is filled with rage and hatred for his brother wishing to harm him before Thyestes does so first (*Thyestes* 176-335). Atreus is blinded by his thirst for revenge for the past wrongdoings against him by Thyestes (*Thyestes* 220-241), and projects onto his brother a threat to his power. Suffice it to say that he is already maddened by his passion of anger. However, the root of his madness and his *ira* is evident; the value of power. In lines 198-204, Atreus is afraid that Thyestes will gather strength and strike for his power. Atreus's misconception of power and hatred for his brother bring him to monstrous conclusions; *Ut nemo doceat fraudis et sceleris vias, | regnum docebit. ne mali fiant times? | nascuntur. istud quod vocas saevum asperum, | agique dure credis et nimium impie, | fortasse et illic agitur.* (Though no one teaches them the ways of deceit and crime, kingship will teach it. You fear their becoming evil? They are born so. What you call cruel and savage, and consider too harsh and unnatural a step, is perhaps being taken on that side too. *Thyestes* 312-316). Atreus when answering for the teachings he is to provide to his children with his upcoming crime, he gives a distorted view of kingship and power, which entails crime and deceit. He is also convinced that Thyestes wants to take his power once again, the only thing he most appreciates and values. Therefore, again there is a mistaken value of an external indifferent, power, governing and filling with passions the mind of men. The chorus counters Atreus's erroneous views on his distorted image of kingship; *nescitis, cupidi arcium, | regnum quo iaceat loco.* (Your greed for strongholds mistakes the place where kingship lies. *Thyestes* 342-343). They continue rejecting wealth as something of kingly value (*Thyestes* 344-347 and 353-357).

> *rex est qui posuit metus*
> *et diri mala pectoris;*
> *quem non ambitio impotens*
> *et numquam stabilis favor*
> *vulgi praecipitis movet.*
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 348-352.

It is safe to infer that the chorus disagrees with Atreus on kingship and the value he places on power and wealth. The chorus's view is Stoic in that a true kind resembles the Stoic *sapiens*, who is free from fear (*metus*, 348), vice (*mala*, 349), ambitious and uncontrollable desires (*ambitio impotens*, 350), or the shifting favour of the populace (*stabilis favor vulgi praecipitis*, *Thyestes* 351-352). The chorus again repeats some of these premises *; rex est qui metuit nihil, / rex est qui cupiet nihil* (A king is one who fears nothing, a king is one who will want nothing. *Thyestes* 388-389).[413] Therefore, Atreus promotes an anti-hero model and a reversed Stoic *sapiens*. Furthermore, the chorus once again attributes power to Fortuna; *Stet quicumque volet potens / aulae culmine lubrico: / me dulcis saturet quies.* (Who wishes may stand in power on a palace's slippery peak: let sweet repose sate me. *Thyestes* 391-393).

[413] Fitch 2018 deletes the lines, but their translation is given in a footnote, p. 265, n 24.

At the end of the third act, Atreus has already received and welcomed Thyestes who decides to reject the royal power and be subjected to Atreus, and finally, a reunion between the two brothers seems to have taken place (*Thyestes* 539-545). However, the audience knows that Atreus is scheming and his kind behaviour is a mask to deceive his brother. Therefore, tragic irony and double meanings seem to diffuse his words functioning as a foreshadowing of Thyestes's children's sacrifice; *Imposita capiti vincla venerando gere; / ego destinatas victimas superis dabo.* (Wear this bond set on your venerable head. For my part, I shall offer the designated victims to the gods above. *Thyestes* 544-545). Atreus announces that he is to make some offerings to the gods, and the scene ends. What he seems to mean is that he is making a sacrifice to the gods to honour Thyestes, but what he really means is that he is killing his children and offering them to their father. The whole act was diffused with irony, deceitfulness and manipulative behaviour. The chorus does not seem to know of Atreus's treachery and acts pleasantly surprised by this sudden course of events and the brothers' reconciliation (*Thyestes* 546-559 and 573-595). However, the chorus prompts the audience to think deeper as it also wonders; *Otium tanto subitum e tumult / quis deus fecit?* (What god has created sudden calm out of such uproar? *Thyestes* 560-561). They comment on the fear of war that has overwhelmed the city (*Thyestes* 561-571); *peior est bello timor ipse belli*. (Worse than war is the fear of war. *Thyestes* 572). The chorus promotes a Stoic position that the worst enemy of men is not disasters per se but human passions. Similarly, Atreus acted upon his fear of losing his power, and anger, which led him to a perverse mental state of madness.

Furthermore, the chorus seems to be ignorant of the disaster afoot but on the other hand, they juxtapose the fear of war in the city (*Thyestes* 561-572) or the terrors caused by mythical beasts and figures and the sea (*Thyestes* 577-587) and their subsidence and relief people feel (*Thyestes* 573-576 and 588-595). Immediately follows a maxim of the fickle nature of *Fortuna*; *Nulla sors longa est: dolor ac voluptas / invicem cedunt; brevior voluptas. / ima permutat levis hora summis.* (No state is lasting; pain and pleasure give way in turn: pleasure is briefer. A short hour switches high and low. *Thyestes* 596-698). Despite their ignorance, the chorus seems to incline the audience to think that the serene period of calm and peace will soon be over as nothing is lasting; pleasure even more. Therefore, the audience is inclined to doubt and test whether the brotherly reconciliation lasts. The chorus continues talking about men in power in the singular person and gives the audience another clue:

> *Anxius sceptrum tenet et moventes*
> *cuncta divinat metuitque casus*
> *mobiles rerum dubiumque tempus.*
> *Vos quibus rector maris atque terrae*
> *ius dedit magnum necis atque vitae,*
> *ponite inflatos tumidosque vultus.*
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 604-609.

He is referred to a man whose crown makes him powerful. This man is afraid he will lose his power and tries

to predict the future and control the fickle time. However, he is arrogant because his power is granted by superior powers, meaning the Fortuna who is in charge of random indifferents such as power:

> *Omne sub regno graviore regnum est.*
> *quem dies vidit veniens superbum,*
> *hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem.*
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 612-614.

It is inferred that the worried man is Atreus since he is the only one who is in power in the plot of Thyestes. Also, he is afraid that his brother wants to take his throne. Seneca, here, tries to warn his audience that even if the powerful man rises in pride one day, he is also brought low (*Thyestes* 613-614); therefore, he should not be proud. Analogically, even Atreus who is about to triumph and succeed in his evil plan, should not be reassured that he will maintain his bliss in the future:

> *Nemo confidat nimium secundis,*
> *nemo desperet meliora lassis:*
> *miscet haec illis prohibetque Clotho*
> *stare Fortunam, rotat omne fatum.*
> *nemo tam divos habuit faventes,*
> *crastinum ut posset sibi polliceri.*
> *res deus nostras celeri citatas*
> *turbine versat.*
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 615-622.

Even in success, one should be vigilant—Fortune is unpredictable and changeable. As shown above, the theme of the fickle Fortuna is very common in Seneca's choruses and aligns with his Stoic philosophy, according to which men should not depend on external indifferents set by chance, which as shown in Chapter 5, is *Fortuna* and it is only another side of *Providentia* and *Natura.*

At the fourth act (*Thyestes* 623-884), the chorus examines again what happened in the plot with investigating and thorough questions (*Thyestes* 629, 638-640, 690, 716, 719, 730-731, 743, 745-746, 747-748) addressing the messenger asking him to reveal the evil; *Effare, et istud pande, quodcumque est, malum.* (Speak out and reveal this evil, whatever it is. *Thyestes* 633). The act of questioning and attempting to find out the details of what happened automatically incites the audience to examine the tragic action and the reasons behind the crime. Furthermore, at the end of the fourth act (*Thyestes* 789-884), the chorus wonders in indignation what the cause of the cosmic disorder is, and it depicts the natural chaos; *Solitae mundi periere vices; / nihil occasus, nihil ortus erit.* The regular cycles of heaven are lost; sunset and sunrise will not exist. *Thyestes* 813-815). Aurora, Phoebus, the Sun, and the Moon are all confused and, as a result, the night comes too early (*Thyestes* 815-826).

The whole universe is dying because of the moral evil committed by men. The chorus expresses their emotions:

Sed quidquid id est, utinam nox sit!
trepidant, trepidant
pectora magno percussa metu,
ne fatali cuncta ruina
quassata labent
iterumque deos hominesque premat
deforme chaos,
iterum terras et mare cingens
et vaga picti sidera mundi
Natura tegat.

Seneca, *Thyestes* 827-834.

The chorus makes clear that the destruction of the cosmos is not something they enjoy; they feel fear and by depicting the loss of order, time and the stars vanishing and departing one after the other (*Thyestes* 835-874) is inviting the audience both to wonder with owe and think of the scale of the catastrophe. They are doomed to eternal night, and Gods have left. The chorus also wonders how from all the humanity it is they that are judged to be crushed (*Nos e tanto visi populo / digni, premeret / quos everso cardine mundus? / in nos aetas ultima venit? Thyestes* 875-888). Finally, the chorus blames their heavy fate although they destroyed or drove the sun away (*o nos dura sorte creatos, / seu perdidimus solem miseri, / sive expulimus! Thyestes* 879-881). The blame befalls human action and vice; Atreus's callousness and hubris make the universe die; disorder is in effect in the kingdom where passions and *furor* rule. Indeed, the most terrifying evil – the only true evil for the Stoics- is moral. In such a world, there is no other solution than a heroic exodus:

Abeant questus, discede timor:
vitae est avidus quisquis non vult
mundo secum pereunte mori.

Seneca, *Thyestes* 882-884.

The end of the fourth act is the last time the chorus appears in the play. They share the Stoic and Senecan view that when there is no possibility to be virtuous and decent in the world, the only thing that remains is suicide. It is not possible to live according to virtues in a world of madness and fury, where only evil exists. Hence, during the fifth act (885-1112), it is only Atreus and Thyestes left perpetuating their vice since their actions and reasoning are the symbols of evil. They morally failed and became monsters in an empty world that the gods have abandoned. The image of gods abandoning the world is used only metaphorically since the Stoic God is the world; hence, gods cannot abandon the world in a literal sense. However, the image of the traditional gods

abandoning the world is a shocking picture of how destructive and immoral the passions can be.

This section's analysis of the plays aimed at highlighting the crucial role of the chorus in Senecan drama. The chorus not only creates a distance between the audience and the extravagant emotions of the play, but its comments and guiding influence also serve to prevent the audience from emotionally bonding with the tragic heroes while inciting them to think more deeply and to examine the characters' state and actions. Last but not least, the chorus also participates in the plot, which is particularly obvious in *Thyestes* where their silence in the fifth action indicates their choice to commit suicide due to the complete lack of living virtuously. The chorus's active role serves as a model for the role the audience should play and encourages them to consider their own reactions. Would suicide be the right reaction? Would they behave similarly to Atreus? One cannot be sure of the answers a member of the audience of a Senecan play may have given to these questions. However, the uncertainty of whether the audience's answers are in accordance with the Stoic premises does not mean that the plays are not compatible with Senecan Stoicism. Indeed, perhaps Seneca's dramas succeeded, and perhaps not, maybe they were able to influence some and not others. But this question of efficacy, which cannot be answered, is not relevant to my argument. Rather, I have tried to offer an account of Senecan drama which sees a coherent and systematic pedagogical aim of encouraging members of the audience to engage in critical reflection on the role of passion in life; further, I have claimed that this model is consistent with Seneca's philosophical writings and commitments as a Stoic, and that there is no contradiction between the plays and Stoic theory. I have also offered an analysis of the crucial role the chorus plays in effecting proper moral guidance for the audience. Future chapters will further elaborate on other mechanisms Seneca employs to accomplish his philosophical project.

Chapter 3 – Physiognomy and the Visualisation of the Passions

Introduction

The current chapter focuses on the visual element in Seneca, specifically the physiognomy of anger and insanity—caused by the frequent exercise of passions—and the Stoic view of emotional experience as a physical event. Therefore, I briefly discuss physiognomics as a common practice in antiquity and examine a couple of methods relevant to this project: the analogy between human behaviours and animal features and postures, and descriptions of the altered and disfigured face resulting from passions. Later, I will explore the significance of physiognomy within Stoicism and interpret it through the lens of Stoic physics. I will defend the view that there is a close link between physiognomy and Stoicism,[414] and contrast the quite absolute idea that the Stoics rejected physiognomics entirely.[415] My perspective is supported by various philosophical passages from Stoic texts and the justification of physiognomy in Stoicism, not as a category internal to the Stoic philosophical system, with the aid of Stoic physics. The passions in Stoicism are corporeal, as is the soul and the entire cosmos. Emotions are tensional movements of the πνεῦμα (the corporeal synaptic substance that unifies matter), which causes movement or change in the heavier parts of the body.[416] Consequently, when an individual experiences anger, it manifests on their face, which transforms due to these tensional motions. The physiognomical aspect was often observed in various forms of work, making the link between physiognomy and Stoicism—particularly during the Roman Imperial period—highly plausible. Finally, I will consider how revealing inner mental states affects the observer, arguing that the creation of mental images in their mind contributes to recognising the true nature and danger of passions. The exhortation of the audience against passions and their realisation of personal responsibility introduce a moral and educative function in the plays. This is demonstrated through examples from the plays, depicting physiognomic manifestations and impersonations of *furor* and their impact on the audience.

Physiognomy

In this section, I am discussing the influence of physiognomy on Seneca and his work. I maintain that although the Stoics cannot be thought of as physiognomists or as active adherents of the 'science' of physiognomics,[417] Seneca was influenced by the wider interest in physiognomics in his era, along with the mainstream fashion in rhetorical methods. Hence, I argue that Seneca employs the visual element and the

[414] Bexley 2022; Evans 1950, pp. 169–184.
[415] Boys-Stones, Graziosi and Vasunia 2009.
[416] Smith 2014.
[417]So far, only Boys-Stones argues for this position in George Boys-Stones 2007. Most other scholars see Stoicism as having a lot in common with physiognomics.

physiognomy of anger and even madness in a certain number of tragedies in agreement with his prose in the service of Stoic philosophical purposes. The delivery of vivid and shocking visual examples could serve ethical purposes since the individuals, even those not familiar with the Stoic tenets, would be able to learn to avoid the path of passions. They can learn from the images and the psychological portraits of the tragic characters in the Senecan plays. Through the visual manifestation of the inner emotional conflicts of those led astray from the virtuous way of living, the procedure of healing the passions and maturing and harmonising the inner microcosm with the cosmos as a whole could start.

In order to achieve the above endeavour, I follow a series of steps. First of all, I briefly examine the various physiognomic theories in antiquity, their techniques and conclusions. In continuation, I compare these to Stoic ethics and physics and the view of passions as corporeal entities or entities which make themselves known through physical manifestations and changes. For this project, the visual element of anger and its resemblance to the physical symptoms of madness are going to draw our attention. The final step will be the association of the above to Seneca's *De Ira*, and their implementation in Senecan tragedy, from which I am drawing several examples of the physical manifestation of passions. These tragedies, including *Medea*, *Thyestes*, *Agamemnon*, and *Heracles Furens*, express the passion of anger, malevolent joy and insanity in a most magnificent manner through the *legible* and *visible* tragic characters.

The practice of deducing one's inner character from their appearance, of presenting the physical body or face as 'text' for the reader or the audience to read to decipher the physical signs that reveal the inner emotional state of the individual, was not a rare phenomenon. As a result, the frequent use of the above practice led to the formation of various works about the concept of physiognomy. Among them, the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica* from the 3rd century B.C., Polemon of Laodicea's *Physiognomy* from the 2nd century A.D., and a Latin *Physiognomia* from the 4th century A.D., whose author remains unknown, are the most prevalent works about physiognomy.

However, before the treatises on physiognomics, there were traces of its practice; Evans and Weiler[418] deem Thersites' description in Homer as one of the first physiognomic examples:[419]

> αἴσχιστος δὲ ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε:
> φολκὸς ἔην, χωλὸς δ᾽ ἕτερον πόδα: τὼ δέ οἱ ὤμω
> κυρτὼ ἐπὶ στῆθος συνοχωκότε: αὐτὰρ ὕπερθε
> φοξὸς ἔην κεφαλήν, ψεδνὴ δ᾽ ἐπενήνοθε λάχνη.
>
> Homer, *Il*. 2.216-19.

Thersites' characterisation as an ugly and deformed figure signals the unpleasant experience of his acquaintance, and hence, there is an early link between the physique and the disposition of a character, although in this case,

[418] Evans 1969, pp. 58-59; Weiler 1996, p. 163.
[419] The translation can be drawn from Lattimore 195. p. 82.

Homer doesn't describe the contents of Thersites' soul.[420] Boys-Stones[421] opposes the idea that Thersites' ugliness indicates his character, and he claims that this physical trait is rather proof of the gods' detestation towards him. However, I agree with Bexley and Thalman[422] in that Thersites' physical appearance indicates his disposition and a moral aspect of his psyche although there is no clear '*doctrinal* influence from physiognomy.'[423] It is worth thinking that Thersites's description and the aversion it causes could be compared to Senecan descriptions of the unpleasant vicious tragic (or not) characters when it comes to physiognomy.

Although there is a plethora of physiognomic examples and theories in the past, I would prefer to direct our attention to only a few of them, which can help us both draw some parallels between them and the Stoic theories and make efficient comparisons between the above. At this point, I need to inform the readers that I am not analysing or explaining the various theories in a strict detailed manner.

Although a confusing association between the ideas of Loxus and Stoics might be created, the two lines of thought had many differences. There are two images which lead to an association between the psychological theories of Loxus on the one hand, and the Stoics Cleanthes and Diogenes of Babylon on the other.[424] Loxus 'Medicus' is known to us as the source of the unknown author of the Latin *Physiognomy*.[425] In section 12 of the Latin *Physiognomy,*[426] he says that the blood is the seat (*sedes*) of the soul, meaning both that the blood is the place where the soul lives and *comes from* and that its quality is responsible for the latter's character.[427] Furthermore, Loxus claims that 'the effect of the body on the soul is that of a musical pipe whose shape makes the same breath sound different'. This passage has been associated[428] with Cleanthes' theoretical beliefs. However, Cleanthes says that the breath, when passing through a trumpet, sounds louder (*Epistles*108.10= *SVF* 1. 487). The other passage of Loxus describes the soul as 'a liquid held in a vessel (*vasculum*) which changes its shape according to the vessel'.[429] However, even though a Stoic could possibly accept the above claim, they would have meant it in a very different sense, since the body might signal the soul's location. The relationship between body and soul is very different since the soul is not subject to change because of the body, as happens to the liquid in the vessel; it is rather what glues and keeps the body together, as Posidonius remarks (F149 EK). This is why Hierocles writes that the soul is not like a liquid in a vessel (*Elements of Ethics*, 4.4-5). The psychological changes in a person do not manifest themselves as expressions of the various nuances of the blood quality pervading our body, a phenomenon which indicates a bodily causal primacy when it comes to the relationship between the body and the soul in Loxus.[430]

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[420] Bexley 2022, p. 255.
[421] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 225, n.4.
[422] Bexley 2022.
[423] Bexley 2022, p. 254, n. 113.
[424] Raina 1993, p. 127; Foerster 1888, p. 511.
[425] For more on the theoretical work and life of Loxus, see Evans 1969 and Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 58-64.
[426] Anon, *Physiognomia Latina*, in *Scriptores physiognomonici Graeci et Latini*, ed. G. Hoffmann (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1893), § 12.
[427] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 63.
[428] Foerster 1888, pp. 510-511.
[429] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 63: cf. references at Gorler 1997, p. 207. The translation (Latin *Physiognomy*) is drawn from Boys'Stones 2007.
[430] Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 63-64.

In his *Physiognomica*, the pseudo-Aristotelian author mentions three different ways to interpret the body. These are the ethnological approach, the zoological approach, and the pathognomic approach (Ps.-Aristotle, *Physiognomica* 805a20-805b1). The zoological view, which focuses on descriptions of analogies between the animals' gestures and behaviour, seems to be preferred.[431] This preference comes in opposition to the Stoic approach to bodily gestures since the latter seems to be more favourable to the pathognomic approach which the Pseudo-Aristotelian text rejects (805b1-10). This method focuses mostly on the brief and temporary expressions of emotion which might reveal the identity of the person having them since the brief expressions that the person shows pertain to their regular disposition as well (805b5-9); if the expressions happen frequently, they indicate an element of disposition.[432] For example, if a person has frequent bursts of anger and 'explodes' without a justifiable reason they might have a more aggressive and irascible personality which is manifest in their passions.

It has been argued that Treatises A and B, which have come to us as the work named *Physiognomy*, and attributed to Aristotle, are written by two different Peripatetic authors, and that, despite their differences, both present a close affinity to Aristotle's work, especially his *Prior Analytics,* and the work in a complementary manner with each other.[433] They both isolate physiognomical signs with the author of Treatise A cataloguing the signs based on the animal species, and the author of Treatise B discerning the animal characteristics into 'male' and 'female' (B at 809^{a}28 ff). Treatise B can be said to follow a more 'teleological' approach than an epiphenomenalistic one.[434] Admittedly, all three passages assume a close connection between body and soul, and they proceed to a physiognomical study of the signs observed in animal species.[435] Boys-Stones categorises Loxus as having an *epiphenomenalist view of the soul* and argues that Loxus' theory has many similarities with Treatise A. The above theories, he concludes, influenced the majority of the post-Aristotelian philosophers who entered into the field of physiognomy,[436] each for their own purposes in favour of their theoretical systems.

However, there was not an official physiognomic system established in the fourth century B.C. but only the emergence of the *possibility of physiognomy*.[437] The various philosophical accounts which explored the relationship between the body and the soul allowed for an increased interest in physiognomy, especially in cases where the nature of the inner self and character was closely connected to the physique and countenance.[438] In various cases, the existence of the word 'physiognomy' in the philosophical vocabulary of Stoic authors or Stoic sources provokes the misleading conclusion that Stoics developed and included physiognomics as a category in their theoretical system. The occurrences of the word φυσιογνώμων can be detected especially in Posidonius (F196.85 EK (= Galen, *PHP* 5. 5. 22. 2), Philo of Alexandria (Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams* 1.164), and Dio

[431] Evans 1969, pp. 6-17; Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 44-75.
[432] Bexley 2022, p. 208. See also Baumbach 2008.
[433] For more details on the argumentation regarding the relationship between the two treatises and between the unknown *Physiognomy* and Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, see Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 64 -75.
[434] Boys-Stones 2007.
[435] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 69.
[436] Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 47-75.
[437] Boys-Stones 2007.
[438] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 94.

Chrysostom (Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 4.87). Boys-Stones astutely argues that these occurrences indicate not affinity but rather the distance between Stoicism (and Hellenistic research) and the practice of physiognomy.[439]

However, there are passages which account for evidence that Stoics regarded physiognomy as a feasible practice and technique which often proved to be useful. Based on these passages, Sakezles attempts to reconstruct a Stoic physiological theory and argues that Aristotle was its most likely inspirer setting out from Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium* where he explains the voluntary motion of the body caused by the soul (Aristotle, *De Motu Animalium* 700b10; 703b3), which she compares to the movement (contractions and expansions) of πνεῦμα in the heart.[440] While a solid Stoic physiognomical theory cannot be absolutely secure nowadays due to a significant ellipsis of evidence, it is worthy to investigate more the passages which nevertheless show an existing and more likely connection between physiognomics and Stoicism as Bexley supported,[441] without forming a distinct Stoic physiological theory.

The following sum of a number of passages show an attribution of physiognomical thought to Stoics. In particular, both Zeno and Cleanthes held that our ἦθος (character) can be revealed by εἶδος (our appearance):

> λέγεται δέ, φάσκοντος αὐτοῦ κατὰ Ζήνωνα καταληπτὸν εἶναι τὸ ἦθος ἐξ εἴδους, νεανίσκους τινὰς εὐτραπέλους ἀγαγεῖν πρὸς αὐτὸν κίναιδον ἐσκληραγωγημένον ἐν ἀγρῷ καὶ ἀξιοῦν ἀποφαίνεσθαι περὶ τοῦ ἤθους· τὸν δὲ διαπορούμενον κελεῦσαι ἀπιέναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ὡς δ᾽ ἀπιὼν ἐκεῖνος ἔπταρεν, "ἔχω," εἶπεν, "αὐτόν," ὁ Κλεάνθης, "μαλακός ἐστι." [442]
>
> DL 7.173 = *SVF* 1.618; part = 1.204.

The above anecdote has been regarded as evidence of the existence of the physiognomic element in Stoicism;[443] According to Diogenes Laertius, Cleanthes was about to be tricked by some young men who presented to him a *cinaedus* whose body had been shaped after hard labour. After he sent him away, the cinaedus sneezed and Cleanthes figured the trickery out because of this physical reaction (Diog. Laert. 7.173; Dio 33.53-4).[444] These stories show that there is an involuntary bodily function which reveals the inner passions and dispositions regardless of the individuals' efforts to hide them.[445]

Another passage which might be thought of as evidence of physiognomy in Stoicism is the following:

> ὑπογράφειν ὁ Κιτιεὺς ἔοικε Ζήνων εἰκόνα νεανίου καὶ οὕτως αὐτὸν ἀνδριαντουργεῖ" ἔστω. φησί, καθαρὺν τὸ πρόσωπον, ὀφρὺς μὴ κχαθειμένη., "μηδ᾽ ὄμμα ἀναπεπταμένον μηδὲ διακεκλασμένον, μὴ

[439] Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 75-76.
[440] Sakezles 1998.
[441] Bexley 2022.
[442] Translation can be drawn from Schofield 1991, p. 116.
[443] Evans 1969, pp. 10-11; Schofield 1991, p. 115; Petrides 2014, p. 147. At the other end of the scale, Boys-Stones 2007, pp. 78-80 refutes this assumption.
[444] For a similar story where the physiognomist Zopurus and Socrates are the protagonists, see Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.80; Diogenes Laertius 2.45.
[445] Bexley 2022, p. 210.

ὕπτιος ὃ τράχηλος. μηδ᾽ ἀνιέμενα τὰ τοῦ σώματος μέλη, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] μετέωρα ἐντόνοις ὅμοια' ὀρθὸς νοῦς πρὸς τὸν λόγον, ὀξύτης καὶ κατοκωχὴ τῶν ὀρθῶς εἰρημένων, καὶ σχηματισμοὶ καὶ κινήσεις μηδὲν ἐνδιδοῦσαι τοῖς ἀκολάστοις ἐλπίδος. αἰδὼς μεν ἐπανθείτω καὶ ἀρρενωπία᾽ ἀπέστω δὲ καὶ ὃ ἀπὸ τῶν μυροπωλίων καὶ χρυσοχοεξέων καὶ ἐριοπωλίων ἅλυς καὶ ὁ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἐργαστηρίων, ἔνθα καὶ ἑταιρικῶς κεκοσμημένοι, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τέγους καθεξόμενοι, διημερεύουσιν.[446]

Zeno of Citium, fragment 246 (SVF I.246 = Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.11.4.

Schofield believes that the above passage is another proof of Stoic physiognomics.[447] In contradiction, Boys-Stones disagrees and claims that anyone could adopt the depicted pose without having the character that the passage describes.[448] However, even if the posture of an individual although on many occasions leading to the assumption of their character, is not a solid and safe source of information from which we can infer a conclusion about one's personality and qualities, the danger resides not in the body itself but in the various interpretations that might be given. Hence, as in Stoic physics, the physical body does give valid information as long as the human agent provides the right interpretation. Also, a physical appearance could convey a certain image to someone's interlocutors in a complimentary manner, no matter whether this message is truthful or not. Therefore, Gleason could be right in claiming that the above passage could be *advisory*; and that a *well- schooled young man* should avoid certain body language which might *signal sexual availability*[449] if he doesn't wish to be mistakenly misjudged by the others.

In addition, the Stoics think that the sage can be grasped as such through perception, using his appearance (εἶδος) as evidence (*SVF* 1.204).[450] However, there are no evident physical features attributed to a sage, although one who becomes a sage supposedly 'becomes beautiful where one had been ugly before' (Plutarch, *That the Stoics Talk More Absurdly than the Poets* 1058 A).[451] One can notice that wisdom, being a sage, brings the opposite physical result to vice, being angry, as Seneca supports that anger renders even the most beautiful face ugly and horrifying: *multus ore toto rubor exaestuante ab imis praecordiis sanguine… foeda visu et horrenda facies depravantium se atque intumescentium* ('His whole face is crimson with the blood that surges from the lowest depths of the heart… it is an ugly and horrible picture of distorted and swollen frenzy.' *De Ira* 1.1.4-5). Furthermore, Seneca acknowledges that all passions have a visual manifestation but anger stands out:

[446] The translation can be drawn from Schofield 1991, p. 116.
[447] Schofield 1991, p. 116.
[448] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 78, n. 134.
[449] Gleason 1990, p. 403.
[450] Diogenes Laértius, 5.173: κατὰ Ζήνωνα καταληπτὸν εἶναι τὸ ἦθος ἐξ εἴδους; Aétius 4.9,17 (DDG p. 398): οἱ Στωικοὶ τὸν σοφὸν αἰσθήσει καταληπτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ εἴδους τεκμηριωδῶς.
[451] See also Boys-Stones 2007, p. 79.

Nec ignoro ceteros quoque affectus vix occultari, libidinem metumque et audaciam dare sui signa et posse praenosci; neque enim ulla vehementior intrat concitatio, quae nihil moveat in vultu. Quid ergo interest? Quod alii affectus apparent, hic eminet.

Sneca, *De Ira* 1.1.7.

Another passage that seemingly betrays Stoic physiognomic principles would be Chrysippus's from his *On the End*, book 2, about goods and evils being perceptible, since passions are perceptible along with their species, such as grief, fear, and also folly and other vices (αἰσθητὰ ἐστι τἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ …οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὰ πάθη ἐστὶν αἰσθητὰ σὺν τοῖς εἴδεσιν, οἷον λύπη καὶ φόβος καὶ τὰ παραπλήσια…ἀλλὰ καὶ… ἀφροσύνης καὶ δειλίας… *SVF* 3.85; 3.84). Both virtues and vices can be perceived through their physical aspects. Indeed, the Stoic doctrine held that qualities were corporeal. They also held, though, that these qualities were not separable from the material bodies in which they occurred. In the same fashion as the cosmos, the πνεῦμα was the breath-like substance which held the corporeal pieces of the universe together, and they all occupied the same space. These physical changes are secondary manifestations of one's τόνος.[452]

Hence, it is undeniable that there is a plethora of Stoic passages (or passages about the Stoics) in which one detects the word 'physiognomy' or its derivatives and even some physiognomic theories, practices and methods in use e.g. the comparison of humans experiencing a particular emotion or being of a specific type or character to animals, the expression of face and bodily changes or features manifesting certain dispositions, or even the categorisation of whole races based on their physical features. Of course, this does not mean that the existence of an active category of physiognomics within the Stoic philosophical system was proven. However, the body does play a role in Stoic theory; it provides the means of sensation and access to the external world on which the individual's judgements depend; if one's judgment is bad and accepted by the rational faculty, the passions are born. Hence, the physiognomic approach, or at least the physiognomic methods, could be associated with Stoicism even if not all of the Stoics were in favour of this practice.

How is this association realised though? The physiognomic approach can be seen under the light of Stoic Physics and therefore, can be adequately explained through the bodily movement that the soul generates. Just like the cosmos, humans were *amalgams*[453] of active and passive elements, the former being the soul and the latter being the body. The Stoics were materialists, meaning that everything in the universe, including the human soul, was corporeal, and the interaction between corporeal bodies caused everything. Indeed, both virtues and vices are corporeal. Seneca defends this idea by explaining (*Epistles*106.6-8) that the good and the bad qualities of the soul cause a change in the body (like a flash of the eyes among other examples), and they must be bodily since only a bodily entity can move another:

Corpora ergo sunt, quae colorem habitumque corporum mutant, quae in illis regnum suum exercent.

[452] Boys-Stones 2007, p. 79; Smith 2014, p. 344.
[453] Smith 2014, p. 343. See also Bronowski 2019, Chapter 3.1.

Seneca, *Epist.*106.7.

Also in *Epistle* 117, Seneca comments on the effect of one body on another:

> *Quod accidit alicui, utrum extra id, cui accidit, est an in eo, cui accidit? Si in eo est, cui accidit, tam corpus est quam illud, cui accidit. Nihil enim accidere sine tactu potest; quod tangit, corpus est. Si extra est, posteaquam acciderat, recessit. Quod recessit, motum habet. Quod motum habet, corpus est*
>
> .

Seneca, *Epist* . 117.7.

There is only one substance, then, that operates on two principles (ἀρχαί), of which one is active (τὸ ποιοῦν or θεός/λόγος) and the other is passive (τὸ πάσχον, ὕλη, Diog. Laert. 7.134, 139 (*SVF* 2.299 f.), 7.150 (*SVF* 2.316)).[454] Cosmos is a combination of idle matter and an active substance, πνεῦμα, which gives form (συνέχειν) and moves the passive matter through physical tension (τόνος/τονική κίνησις, *SVF* 2.441, 444, 448, 451). The passive matter that comprises the world is water and earth, whereas the active matter is fire and air, which compose πνεῦμα, which is a kind of warm vapour or breath which 'turns back to itself', creating a tensional movement, a simultaneous flow inwards and outwards, which causes tension and unity (*SVF* 2.442, 451, 452). Again, we are not talking about two distinctive substances, since these two are inseparable and manifest different aspects of the same procedure.[455] This process operates both on a universal scale and an individual scale.[456] The pneumatic tension taking place in the human soul is a microcosmic manifestation of the pneuma operating in the whole cosmos. It was a kind of 'complete mixture'[457] where both substances extended the one through the other and still maintained their own qualities (*SVF* 2.473), an animal which is 'a composite of body and soul mixed through and through' (Hierocles, *Elements of Ethics* 4.38=LS 53 B5).[458] The body and the heavier parts of it are entirely pervaded by the human soul, which is a 'superfine corporeal body' (σῶμα λεπτομερές), a form of air which gives form and unites the corporeal passive unqualified body (*SVF* 2.780). All the more, according to Galen, Chrysippus defined the soul as 'the πνεῦμα innate in us, continuous, running through the whole body, so long as the breath of fire remains in the body' (*SVF* 2.885; cf. Diog. Laert. 7.156 = *SVF* 2.774, *SVF* 2.778).[459]

Seneca also agrees with the mainstream view of the soul as a fragment of the cosmic soul (Diog. Laert. 7.143 (= *SVF* 2.633); *SVF* 2.634) in *Epistle* 66.12, where he claims that 'Reason, however, is nothing else than a portion of the divine spirit (*spiritus*) set in a human body.' (*Epistles* 66.12). The soul is similar to the Reason or

[454] Smith 2014, Sambursky 1959, Lapidge 1973, Hahm 1977; for Seneca, see Wildberger 2006.
[455] Smith 2014, p. 344; Lapidge 1973.
[456] Smith 2014, pp. 344-345.
[457] Smith 2014, p. 345. Also, see Annas 1992, pp. 47-50; Long 1982 p. 38f,. Long 1999, pp. 561f.
[458] See also Sakezles 1998, p. 143.
[459] Translation can be drawn from Smith 2014, p. 345.

God living in the human body (*Epistles* 31.11). The divine πνεῦμα pervades the whole cosmos, but what makes the case of humans so special is their ability to think rationally and to reason; thus, they have a greater affinity with the universal Reason that governs the cosmos.[460]

Πνεῦμα, located in the area around the heart (Galen, *On the Formation of the Foetus* 4.698, 2-9 (*SVF* 2.761, part; LS 53D); *PHP 5.2.49, 5.3.1 (SVF* 2.841*,* part; LS 53U)), also extends throughout the body with parts that resemble the tentacles of an octopus (Aetius 4.21.1-4, *SVF* 2.836, part; LS 53H) or a spider in its web, as Chrysippus argued (*SVF* 2.879.). In Seneca, the soul is the centre from where the corporeal πνεῦμα is diffused and spread out to the body and enables the organism to perceive and move. It is also the physical factor responsible for the perception or presentation, the assent and the impulses on which our actions depend.[461] The passions are included in this list, as they are also impulses. As much as physiognomics is concerned, emotions could be thought of as an inner state of mind, which is revealed through their physical manifestations. According to Stoic physics and ethics, the physiognomic idea can be valid since emotions, for which the human soul and their operations and cognitive processes are responsible, are corporeal, similarly to the soul itself. Impulses are defined as 'a motion of psyche toward something' (Stobaeus, *Ecl*. 2.7.9 (86W), 2.7.9b (88W)).[462] Hence, if the emotions are the changes and movements of the psychic material, they must also be corporeal, since the psyche is corporeal. Furthermore, passions have often been defined as physical changes; distress is a contradiction (συστολή) of psyche, whereas delight is an elevation (ἔπαρσις) of the psyche (Stobaeus, *Ecl*. 2.7.10b (90W)). Also, Chrysippus defines distress as shrinking, whereas delight as elevation, and he mentions 'contradictions and outpourings: λύπην δ᾽ εἶναι συστολὴν ψυχῆς ἀπειθῆ λόγῳ, αἴτιον δ᾽ αὐτῆς τὸ δοξάξευν πρόσφατον κακὸν παρεῖναι, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ καθήκει συστέλλεσθαι (*SVF* 1).[463] These are psychophysical movements, and hence, there must be a kind of physical change underlying every feeling. Passions contain prepositional content, the judgments, but they are also impulses and are corporeal entities. Hence, a mental event is a physical event.

Seneca explicitly believes both that passions are corporeal and that they can cause certain movements and changes to the body (especially to the face, as we will see later on):

> *Non puto te dubitaturum, an adfectus corpora sint* [...] *tamquam ira, amor, tristitia, nisi dubitas, an vultum nobis mutent, an frontem adstringant, an faciem diffundant, an ruborem evocent, an fugent sanguinem. Quid ergo? Tam manifestas notas corporis credis inprimi nisi a corpore? Si adfectus corpora sunt, et morbi animorum, ut avaritia, crudelitas, indurata vitia et in statum inemendabilem adducta;*
>
> Seneca, *Epist*.106.5-6.

[460] Smith 2014, p. 347.
[461] Smith 2014, p. 351. On the physics of action and the emotions see Graver 2014, pp. 257-275.
[462] It is a direction towards 'the predicate contained in the endorsed proposition' in Graver 2007, p. 27. More on the cognitive procedure and evaluation of externals in Graver 2007.
[463]Von Arnim 1978, *SVF* I, pp. 24–25. See also Stobaeus, *Anthologium*, vol. 2, p. 90, line 14).

These marks on the body created by the passions are due to the physical tensional movement, which is revealed in the face of the person suffering from the disease of the soul. The face is the unqualified matter which suffers from anger and has its form changed and altered by passion, which is also corporeal. This is why the detailed physiognomic descriptions in the Senecan plays are in agreement with Stoicism. They follow a physiognomic approach in that the face or the physique reveals the inner psychological state, but they also confirm the Stoic theory that the emotions, being physical movements and changes of the psychic material, can move the tensions of the heavier matter of the body; thus, physiognomic theories and Stoic physics join their forces to realise Seneca's educational purposes in his tragedies as it will be shown in the last part of the current chapter.

Furthermore, the body is not just a vessel from which the soul longs to be freed; it is itself an object of observation and the soul's perception. Seneca says that skilled dancers whose gestures are perfectly synchronised to the meaning of the song and the matching emotions resemble animals' nature; the dancers have bestowed their ability through craftsmanship, whereas the animals have acquired their abilities by nature (*Epistles* 3.121.5-8). Seneca indicates the need for observance and familiarity with the human body, our *tool* in our endeavour to perceive the world around us. For us to see and make judgements on the outer environment, we need to make sure of the way our means of sight functions. We need to observe and perceive our body first. Hence, self-perception is necessary for our perception of the world (Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* 3.16). We need to perceive our bodies as ours in order to be able to process information received from the outer environment. All the perception of the world, then, involves self-perception. However, there is the idea that *through painful effort,* we are *trained ourselves to the demands of nature*. Hence, the physiognomic characteristics and the importance of the body in our character's development do not negate the key role of cognitive elements and rational faculty, since we need to form truthful and right judgments through the external stimuli we receive through our body, and then adjust our behaviour accordingly.

The Stoics used the term συναίσθησις to express the mutual function and interrelation between the perception of the world and the self-perception; it is the 'perception of one thing along with another.'[464] The key aspect here is that for an individual to reach the point of shaping judgements and evaluations about the external world, on which evil depends, since there is no natural evil in the Stoic universe, they first need to perceive their body and their organs, their tools of perceiving the outer environment. Hierocles (*Ethical Principle*s 1.55-2.3) says that 'the first proof that an animal perceives its whole self is co-perception (συναίσθησις) of the limbs and the functions for which they are provided.' Hence, for an animal to perceive the world, it needs to perceive itself and the organs through which it experiences the universe.

However, Epictetus in his *Discourses* explicitly describes that one cannot deem another as a human being just because of their appearance: τί οὖν ἔλεγες, ὅτι ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν; μὴ γὰρ ἐκ ψιλῆς μορφῆς κρίνεται τῶν ὄντων ἕκαστον ('Why, then, did you call him a human being? For surely everything is not judged by its outward appearance only, is it?' Epictetus, *Discourses*, 4.5.20).[465] The claim that everything cannot be judged by its

[464] For a summary of the argumentation about the meaning of the word συναίσθησις, see Boys-Stones 2007, p. 84.
[465] Epictetus, *Discourses*, 4.5.20: ἐπεὶ οὕτως λέγε καὶ τὸ κήρινον μῆλον εἶναι. καὶ ὀδμὴν ἔχειν αὐτὸ δεῖ καὶ γεῦσιν· οὐκ ἀρκεῖ ἡ ἐκτὸς περιγραφή. οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἡ ῥὶς ἐξαρκεῖ καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, ἀλλ᾽ ἂν τὰ δόγματα ἔχῃ

outward appearance (οὐκ ἀρκεῖ ἡ ἐκτὸς περιγραφή, *Discourses*, 4.5.20) can suffice to comprehend that the Stoics were not in favour of deducing the human character from the outer appearance. At least the countenance is not enough to draw safe conclusions; οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἡ ῥὶς ἐξαρκεῖ καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, ἀλλ᾽ ἂν τὰ δόγματα ἔχῃ ἀνθρωπικά *(Discourses*, 4.5.20). This period also suffices for evidence against an active physiognomic practice in Stoicism since it prioritises the soul or cognitive primacy over the body. The eyes or the nose of an individual do not satisfy the criterion of the attribution of being human; the possession of human judgments, though, is an adequate criterion to deem one as a man. Hence, we already see that the cognitive inner procedures prevail over the physical characteristics, such as the eyes, nose, and face, which were distinguishing signs of inner information in physiognomics. Also, Cleanthes says that 'uneducated people differ from animals only in form' (*SVF* 1.517). However, these passages do not suffice to refute the links between Stoicism and physiognomy, as they could only mean that the appearance is not enough to make a valid judgement. There is also an inner procedure to be made, as the physical manifestation is also another external stimulus to interpret.

However, the existence of different Stoic views on whether the character could be discerned from appearance or not does not mean that all Stoics held the same opinion. This is the case of Seneca; Evans[466] suggests that physiognomy studies have been a possible influence on Seneca's tragedies. Indeed, I would like to agree in that Seneca did exploit physiognomic principles, such as the delineation of body and facial expression, along with rhetorical devices in order to meet his Stoic philosophical needs and also to be keeping up with the fashion of his era. I would like to add that he used his physiognomic methods to attract his readers and/or his audience to his tragedies, and to mould their rational faculty without proceeding to a lengthy and perhaps exhaustive, for the unaware reader or viewer, exegesis of the function of anger and its consequences. In this way, he could initiate or trigger a Stoic therapy of the passions in them.

A feature that physiognomics and apparently Seneca also attribute to the physical traits is the communicative quality; the body is like a text awaiting decoding.[467] Seneca uses *notae* to mean 'writing' at *Epistle* 40.1: *quanto incundiores sunt litterae, quae vera amici absentis vestigia, versa notas adferunt*).[468] *Notas* can be interpreted either as marks and signs or as letters on paper which communicate a certain message to the reader (*notae*).[469] The word 'nota' seems to be significantly important in Senecan prose, as his *Epistle* 52.12 writes that behavioural characteristics can be shown through identifying marks (*..in apertum per notas exeunt*).

ἀνθρωπικά. οὗτος οὐκ ἀκούει λόγου, οὐ παρακολουθεῖ ἐλεγχόμενος· ὄνος ἐστίν. τούτου τὸ αἰδῆμον ἀπονενέκρωται· ἄχρηστός ἐστιν, πρόβατον, πάντα μᾶλλον ἢ ἄνθρωπος. οὗτος ζητεῖ, τίνα ἀπαντήσας λακτίσῃ ἢ δάκῃ· ὥστε οὐδὲ πρόβατον ἢ ὄνος, ἀλλά τί ποτε ἄγριον θηρίον. ('Why, if that is so, you will have to call the lump of beeswax an apple. No, it must have the smell of an apple and the taste of an apple; its external outline is not enough. Therefore, neither are the nose and the eyes sufficient to prove that one is a human being, but you must see whether one has the judgements that belong to a human being. Here is a man who does not listen to reason, he does not understand when he is confuted; he is an ass. Here is one whose sense of self-respect has grown numb; he is useless, a sheep, anything but a human being. Here is a man who is looking for someone whom he can kick or bite when he meets him; so that he is not even a sheep or an ass, but some wild beast'). All translations of Epictetus's *Discourses* are drawn from Epictetus, *Discourses*, trans. W. A. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925–1928).

[466] Evans 1950.

[467] Bexley 2022, p. 212.

[468] Bexley 2022, p. 244, n. 101: *OLD s.v. nota* entries 1 and 6.

[469] Bexley 2022, p. 244.

Moreover, he also uses the term *notae* to describe the signals and signs that show animals' hostility and aggressive disposition (*De Ira* 1.1.5). Furthermore, he links these warning physical signs to the bodily signs of anger in humans,[470] which is another physiognomic common tactic. The above term is also present in the *Latin Physiognomia* (11: *denotabit*; 16: *notat*; 105: *denotatur*) along with other terms that reveal the ability of the physical gestures to function as letters and words on paper, conveying a message, such as *signa* and *indicia*. Baumbach, in particular, astutely claims that 'physiognomy is above all an art of reading, of deciphering and interpreting a text'.[471] Conroy[472] also supports this view by saying that the bodies are to be deemed texts since they, along with their actions, might be considered *objects of analysis* within the theatrical frame. This idea can be enhanced if one thinks that in drama, the use of a mask or/and the face of the actor makes the latter 'legible' to the audience.[473] The revelation, though, is valid only if someone knows how to read the signs or the text that the physical gestures provide.

Furthermore, these corporeal signals do reveal the true emotions of the individual, and they unmask even the most adequately hidden depths of their psychological interiority. According to the Stoic doctrine, it is not the physical objects and bodies that mislead us or lie to us. The mind and the bad interpretation of the outer stimuli are the culprits. Bodies communicate a certain message; they are sources of psychological information. It is up to the 'reader' to decode it sufficiently without being misled by their own set of beliefs, values and judgments. Similarly, the bodies on the theatrical stage do not lie, since the actors do not simply pretend or copy the behaviour of a persona.[474] On the contrary, they communicate the inner state of a character to the audience,[475] leaving the actors' personalities behind for a while. At the given moment, the body on stage *is* the tragic figure's body. Hence, it is up to the audience to interpret and decipher the information that the physique and the physical objects on stage are providing. The more an individual has exercised their corporeal knowledge and has been trained in reading the outer stimuli around them, the better they will understand the message conveyed through the physical bodies both on stage and in their everyday life, exactly as a physiognomist or a Stoic would do. Moreover, it is not only a coincidence that passions are born because of the erroneous interpretations of the external stimuli, actions, movements and changes. This is why there is only moral evil in the Stoic theory, and this is created in the mind of humans.

Hence, how do the physiognomics and the Stoic physics relate to the tragic figures of the Senecan plays? Both physiognomic views and theatrical performance use the body as a site of characterological information. The characters' portraits are useful to mediate between a figure's inner world and psyche and their outer appearance.[476] The content of the interior mental and emotional state can be conveyed through the bodily gestures and features of the characters. To quote Bexley, that 'for Seneca, the corporeal semiotics of the theatre

[470] Bexley 2022, p. 245.
[471] Baumbach 2008, p. 98.
[472] Conroy 2010, p. 14.
[473] Bexley 2022, p. 267. For an analysis and a counterargument to the use of the tragic mask as a blockage and concealment to the communication of emotions and true dispositions, see Bexley 2022, Chapter 3.
[474] Conroy 2010, p. 40.
[475] Bexley 2022, p. 223.
[476] Bexley 2022, p. 248.

provided the perfect opportunity for examining the personal, somatic consequences of Stoic materialism.'[477] Thus, an individual with knowledge of physiognomics would be able to read the character's façade and ultimately comprehend the latter's motives and feelings in more depth than a viewer who cannot connect the interior to the exterior. Colette Conroy brilliantly remarks that 'the question of *where* thinking takes place is important because thinking seems to be an invisible activity, but humans must think audibly or visibly if they are to communicate with each other at all, let alone create theatre.'[478]

The tragic portraits of the characters present a series of emotional symptoms in patterns, which work as *diseases* rendering themselves present through their physical manifestations. These symptoms could be catalogued and studied as happened in the physiognomic classification of character types (e.g. *the devious man*, *the gluttonous man,* and so on).[479] These patterns could be very useful in the diagnosis of the diseases that afflict the soul and mind, according to both the physiognomic thought and the Stoics.[480] The diagnosis of anger, lust, and fear is a salient step in order to cure the cognitive and emotional diseases, according to Seneca. Indeed, emotions are *corpora*, which cause physical changes and movements to inform us they are there.[481] It would be possible that the emotional diseases function similarly to the bodily diseases; the symptoms that one observes, although unpleasant, are there to tell us something and warn us that something might be wrong. We need to pay more attention to these symptoms in order to decipher them.[482] Moreover, the distinction between the physical and the emotional realm might not be so sharp, since the soul's passions cause tangible and observable physical changes or reactions, which are signified by bodily elements, according to Stoicism. Even nowadays, we hear about the 'psychosomatic symptoms', which are physical reactions and manifestations of emotional traits.

What purpose do these physiognomic methods and the human 'texts' serve? How do they function? Do they indeed succeed in meeting the philosophical theories that Seneca espoused? Seneca in particular advises Lucilius as follows:

> *Omnia rerum omnium, si observentur, indicia sunt, et argumentum morum ex minimis quoque licet capere: inpudicum et incessus ostendit et manus mota et unum interdum responsum et relate ad caput digitus et flexus oculorum; inprobum risus, insanum vultus habitusque demonstrat. Illa enim in apertum per notas exeunt.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 52.12.

It is apparent and most significant, then, that also in Seneca, corporeal expression reveals psychological qualities. A person's mindset can be read on one's face or bodily features and gestures. The above passage refers

[477] Bexley 2022, p. 275.
[478] Conroy 2010, p. 23.
[479] Bexley 2022, p. 253.
[480] Bexley 2022, p. 253.
[481] Bexley 2022, p. 275.
[482] See Nussbaum 1997 for a detailed analysis on the view of passions as a form of disease that needs to be cured.

to aberrant and bizarre traits, which an individual might want to keep for themselves, but their body gives them away.[483] Instances of this phenomenon can be detected in the Senecan *Thyestes* when Atreus is worried about the possibility that his sons' faces might betray his evil plans saying *multa…trepidus solet/ detegere vultus, magna nolentem quoque/ consilia produnt* ('a fearful face often reveals a lot, and great plans betray a person even against his will.' *Thyestes* 330-332). Similarly, in Seneca's *Agamemnon* the Nurse observes that all of Clytemnestra's pain is apparent in her face even though she is silent (*licet ipsa sileas, totus in vultu est dolor, Agamemnon* 128). In *Medea*, we notice the exact same phenomenon since Jason observes Medea's anger in her face (*fert odia prae se: totus in vultu est dolor. '*She bears her anger before her: all her pain is in her face'. *Medea* 446). The deceptive behaviour, which attempts to keep a deviant trait secret, can be associated and linked to a passage in *De Ira* where Seneca comments on the behaviour of an angry man's body:

> *Totum concitum corpus "magnasque irae minasagens," foeda visu et horrenda facies depravantium se atque intumescentium—nescias utrum magis detestabile vitium sit an deforme. Cetera licet abscondere et in abdito alere; ira se profert et in faciem exit, quantoque maior, hoc effervescit manifestius.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 1.1.4-5.

The greater the intensity of the passion, the more visible its corporeality. According to Cairns, even the attempt of the individual to hide their true intentions and emotions functions as a veil, which not only does not attend on the deceit, but, on the contrary, reveals the hidden inner world behind the veil; the visual component which functions as a protective partition, manifests what the others cannot see.[484] Hence, the anger on Medea's face or the worry depicted on Atreus' sons' faces, might not explicitly tell us the exact structure of their evil plans, but they will nevertheless, inform us and motivate us to suspect that they were under the influence of an emotional conflict or that they were processing a malevolent scheme in their mind.

The signals which the physique provides can also be characterised as symptoms. Passions created in a human's soul and mind leave 'imprints' on the body and face, being corporeal entities themselves. Hence, an experienced and well-trained 'reader' would be able to *diagnose* the physical symptoms and scout out the inner private mental state of the individual. This would be the first step to a series of steps that will eventually lead to achieving Stoic therapy of passions in an audience trained to behave as a compassionate doctor does.[485]

The first step towards someone's therapy of anger is to show them the destructive nature of this passion. Given that Seneca cares about the fierce πάθος his characters have in common - anger- and offers them as examples to avoid in his prose in order to show his readers the true nature of this passion, it would be very likely that he follows the same strategy in his tragedy. In his *De Ira*, Seneca gives examples of men in history and politics whose behaviour we should avoid imitating, he says:

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[483] Bexley 2022, p. 212.
[484] Cairns 2011, pp. 19–20.
[485] On Seneca's audience, see more in chapter 2 of the current treatise.

Non enim Gai saevitiam, sed irae, propositum est describere, quae non tantum viritim furit sed gentes totas lancinat, sed urbes et flumina et tuta ab omni sensu doloris converberat.

Seneca, *De Ira* 3.19.5.

Reading Seneca's prose and especially his verses, one can almost immediately comprehend the mastery of visual detail, which permeates Senecan work. One of the aims of this project is to illustrate the role of the visual and its meaning in the Senecan drama. It will be argued that visual illustrations in Senecan drama have a significant impact on the audience, guiding them through emotional movement to philosophical realisations and towards self-examination and virtue.[486] Such vivid visual illustrations as those of Seneca, and the latter's tragedy, are the ideal means to influence the audience, since art can provide this aesthetical experience which deeply moves and emotionally shakes the individuals. It makes them get involved from a 'safe' distance and hence, being able to analyse and contemplate what they watch or read.

Senecan dramaturgy depicts the enormity and the disastrous nature of anger through the stories of its characters in order for the audience to be incited to ponder their own emotions, as shown in the second Chapter. Some tragic figures in particular are the ones that adequately manifest the spectrum of anger, namely Medea, Hercules, Juno, Atreus, and Clytemnestra. Their stories can be used to prove a point and make the audience start thinking that anger can lead to irreversible cruelty, and that it would be beneficial to take pains to cure it, now that anger is at a very preliminary stage or *around the corner*.

In order for the audience to achieve the realisation that anger needs to be avoided and find tragedies helpful, they will pass through a cognitive and physiological process. While attending the play, they will likely experience the so-called προπάθειαι (pre-passions),[487] which are physical reactions to what they see. A pre-passion could be a startle or a scream in the view of something or someone horrible, a feeling of disgust or fear. However, they are not real emotions; they are only reactions. Furthermore, they might prove to be quite useful; during the aesthetical experience the audience looks at the angry man and faces his crimes. However, with the aid of the Stoic co-perception, the viewers or readers perceive not only the image of the angry man, but also their own reaction to the ramifications of the excessive πάθος. They have a chance to observe the alterations and disfigurations of which anger is capable, from a safe space, and at the same time they can understand the terrible course a passion can lead to if left untreated; Through their reactions and the perception of their own selves they could see the ugliness of passions and the terror of which the latter are responsible. They might even feel angry themselves when they see the misfortunes of the 'villains' and experience the pre-passions of anger. However, the visualisation of the emotions which potentially might be theirs could make them understand the horror to

[486] See Kirichenko 2013.

[487] Plutarch, *Moralia*, 2.10.666d: 'πολλοὺς' γάρ (ὡς ὁ Εὐριπίδης φησί), 'βροντῆς πνεῦμ' ἄναιμον ὤλεσε.' καὶ γὰρ ἄλλως τῶν αἰσθητηρίων ἡ ἀκοὴ παθητικώτατόν ἐστιν, καὶ μεγίστας οἱ διὰ ψόφου θόρυβοι καὶ φόβοι ταραχὰς ἐπιφέρουσιν· ὧν τῷ καθεύδοντι πρόβλημα τὸ ἀναίσθητόν ἐστιν. οἱ δ' ἐγρηγορότες Dκαὶ ταῖς προπαθείαις ἀναλίσκονται καί, τοῦ δέους τὸ σῶμα συνδέοντος ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ συνάγοντος καὶ πυκνοῦντος, ἰσχυρὰν ποιοῦσι τὴν πληγὴν τῷ ἀντερείδειν."

which their anger might lead. In this way, they could be more easily motivated to seek a cure for their excessive impulses.

Furthermore, I would like to dwell on Seneca's phrase *movet mentes et atrox pictura et iustissimorum suppliciorum tristis adspectus.* ('Our minds are perturbed by a shocking picture and by the melancholy sight of punishment even when it is entirely just.' *De Ira*, 2.2.4). Seneca refers to 'shocking pictures', which can possibly be linked to the shocking pictures depicted in tragedy, especially his own. Seneca seems to be aware of the effect these pictures have on the human soul. He also mentioned above that their effect is not real passion but only the beginning of it; the moving in the soul that an impression causes, and nothing more. If these claims are to be considered in conjunction with the pressing need for healing anger that the philosopher keeps bringing up, the responsibility our rational faculty has for the formulation of passions, and his macabre and vividly descriptive plays, one would likely infer that his tragedies are to show the ugly nature of anger and its consequences. Through his tragedies, Seneca can elicit affective movements in the reader in a harmless manner to scare them away from this emotion and motivate them to take pains to prevent or cure it. The first step, then, one needs to take to cure others' anger, is to show them what anger is capable of during its *reign* in the individual's mind (*Ideo quemadmodum sanari debeat monstra, De Ira*, 3.3.1). The *furies* need to be revealed:

> *Necessarium est itaque foeditatem eius ac feritatem coarguere et ante oculos ponere quantum monstri sit homo in hominem furens quantoque impetu ruat non sine pernicie sua perniciosus et ea deprimens, quae mergi nisi cum mergente non possunt. Quid ergo? Sanum hunc aliquis vocat, qui velut tempestate correptus non it sed agitur et furenti malo servit, nec mandat ultionem suam, sed ipse eius exactor animo simul ac manu saevit carissimorum eorumque quae mox amissa fleturus est carnifex?*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 3.3.2-4.

As we will see later, the frenzied heroes' faces constantly get distorted and dehumanised, reminding us more of a wild and manic beast, as it is shown later in the last section of the current chapter. Seneca himself seems to agree with this claim; in his *De Ira* talks about hellish monsters coming from the poet's brain (*poetae inferna monstra*):

> *Quales sunt hostium vel ferarum caede madentium aut ad caedem euntium aspectus, qualia poetae inferna monstra finxerunt succincta serpentibus et igneo flatu, quales ad bella excitanda discordiamque in populos dividendam pacemque lacerandam teterrimae inferum exeunt: talem nobis iram figuremus.*
>
> Seneca*, De Ira*, 2.35.5.

We can see how the physiognomic traits have influenced Seneca; he creates a bodily manifestation of the passion, Furia, a *hideous* creature emerging from the Underworld, steeped in madness that yearns for 'blood'. Furia is a vivid depiction of anger (*furor*).

Both in Senecan prose and drama (e.g. in *Hercules Furens*), *furor* is embodied by the Furia. Such a hideous form Seneca wished to give to anger; an anger responsible for crimes that matched only the vehemence and cruelty of the nature of this passion. Anger reminds us of a *fury* and a *raging demon* which controls the mind, whereas the agent has lost control of it and cannot cease the force of the passion even if she wishes so. It is the *furor* which becomes *furia*. The fury here symbolises the πάθος of anger which infests the human mind. The mythological Fury (*furia*, which also means 'insanity'), whom Juno sent to Heracles, entirely engulfed the latter, making him insane. The fury turned him into a monster, as Seneca mentions in the passage above, and led him to his destruction. However, in Seneca's version of *Hercules Furens*, there is no *Furia*, meaning an agent of insanity sent from the underworld. The madness Hercules experiences, by contrast, appears to emerge from himself.

Furthermore, this fury makes the individual scheme and realise their evil plans, murdering 'those persons who are dearest, that when lost, he is destined ere long to weep' (*De Ira* 3.3.3). These words coming from the Senecan prose can be paralleled with the Senecan Medea, who machinates and prepares her children's murder even if her maternal side is going to make her *weep* afterwards. Such is the hatred boiling inside her:

> *crimine et culpa carent,*
> *sunt innocentes, fateor: et frater fuit.*
> *quid, anime, titubas? ora quid lacrimae rigant*
> *variamque nunc huc ira, nunc illuc amor*
> *diducit? anceps aestus incertam rapit;*
>
> Seneca, *Medea* 935-939.

Here, there is an allusion to Seneca's prose, since Medea is a tragic figure who harms her loved ones and weeps, and, hence, her anger makes her destroy both the people around her and herself. Also, Medea gives a very vivid image of her inner state of anger, which leads to conflict with her maternal love, and physiognomically manifests in tears, which is another connection with Seneca's philosophical prose.

Senecan tragedies manifest the gamut of anger and the latter's fierceness and cruelty, through images, themes, symbolisations, and most importantly, the tragic characters themselves, along with their actions, which are products of their mental reasoning. Hence, all the appearances, the horror, the callous creatures, and the metaphorically disfigured human and their crimes are only strong indications and manifestations of the even more violent inner world and mental state, in which the soul has indulged its passion and, consequently, let itself be ruled by vice:

Qualem intus putas esse animum, cuius extra imago tam foeda est? Quanto illi intra pectus terribilior vultus est, acrior spiritus, intentior impetus, rupturus se nisi eruperit!

Seneca, *De Ira* 2.35.4-5.

The outer world, which in Senecan drama is characterised by chaos and turbulence, reflects the inner world of a mentally unstable individual, which reaches the point of insanity as they are 'driven by their anger' (*De Ira*, 3.3.3). He wonders whether the physical manifestation of anger 'is a more detestable vice, or an ugly one' (*nescias utrum magis detestabile uitium sit an deforme, De Ira,* 1.3.4). Indeed, the facial expression of a man in a fury is the worst (*De Ira*, 3.4.1), the ugliest, the most frightening:

Nihil tamen aeque profuerit quam primum intueri deformitatem rei, deinde periculum. Non est ullius adfectus facies turbatior; pulcherrima ora foedavit, torvos vultus ex tranquillissimis reddit; linquit decor omnis iratos.

Seneca*, De Ira*, 2.35.3.

Seneca, in his tragedies, without using special terminology, depicts the beautiful and good that turns into evil, a transformation which initiates within the soul, as the virtuous turn to vice by the strength of the passion, and then finds expression in the physical. What is the purpose for this horrible and not very charming presentation of anger? It cannot be convincing that such frequent and violent depictions occur because of chance or only for 'artistic purposes'. The following passage will perhaps give us some guidance:

aut si qua magis dira facies excogitari diri adfectus potest.
Quibusdam, ut ait Sextius, iratis profuit aspexisse speculum; perturbavit illos tanta mutatio sui; velut in rem praesentem adducti non agnoverunt se. Et quantulum ex vera deformitate imago illa speculo repercussa reddebat? Animus si ostendi et si in ulla materia perlucere posset, intuentis nos confunderet ater maculosusque et aestuans et distortus et tumidus. Nunc quoque tanta deformitas eius est per ossa carnesque et tot impedimenta effluentis; quid si nudus ostenderetur? Speculo quidem neminem deterritum ab ira credideris: quid ergo est? Qui ad speculum venerat, ut se mutaret, iam mutaverat; iratis quidem nulla est formonsior effigies quam atrox et horrida, qualesque esse etiam videri volunt.
Magis illud videndum est, quam multis ira per se nocuerit.

Seneca, *De Ira*, 2.35.6-36.1.

The influence of physiognomy is mostly apparent here; if the angry man sees himself in the mirror, he will face the monstrosity depicted in his face, a physical change on his physique caused by anger, that, nevertheless, as

terrifying as it looks, is just a small cost for his passion. The soul cannot be shown, not completely. The inner state is far worse than the countenance of the person in the bondage of his own passion. However, if the angry man sees the change in himself and realises their range, he gets alarmed. He starts wondering. Could this be the real case behind the monstrous images in the Senecan drama? I would like to suggest that in the same fashion that the angry man faces his anger's work on him in the mirror, Seneca puts his audience in front of a mirror of their anger; what they would look like and what the terror and ugliness of anger would be if they let it conquer. However, the angry man will not change his behaviour simply by seeing himself in the mirror, because if he is still angry, he will not realise how ugly and shocking his reflection is. In order for the mirror method to be effective, one has to approach the mirror with the *desire* or *intent* to change. Seneca expects his audience to be shocked by the ugly appearance of the passions and examine what they see. They are not in a passionate state while attending the plays, hence they are calm enough to process the plot and their emotional reactions, in contrast to the angry man. The audience is shocked by the spectacle and the image of *furor* and is scared away from it, wondering about the causes of such a disaster and evil.

The audience, through co-perception, would be scared away from such monstrosity, and they could adjust their evaluation system; *You may perhaps think that no one has really been frightened out of anger by a mirror. Well, what then?* (*De Ira* 2. 35.6-36.1). Now they could have the vivid picture of anger in their mind to remind them that they need to never let anger get the best of them, because it would be fatal and harmful both to their loved ones and themselves. Hence, already, Seneca's tragedies lead their readers one step closer to Stoic therapy. They place evil right in front of their eyes.

The stories of the tragic characters, though, could be thought of as unlikely to happen to the average everyday individual. However, if we pay a bit more attention, we will see that it is not that hard to let our imagination and our values guide us to the 'dark place' in the realm of our excessive emotions. It is not unrealistic that an individual experiences intense emotional upheaval because of their belief system. An inner 'monster' cannot be created and fully evolved in a day. We need to feed it with our indulgence in passions. This is what Senecan tragedies teach us; we need to pay attention to these feelings, thoughts and emotions; we need to face our monsters instead of ignoring them and rationally cultivate them and mould them in accordance with virtue. Hence, it is not totally inconceivable that Seneca tried to cure or at least incite the audience toward the direction of pursuing ἀπάθεια, the Stoic therapy of passions and the soul. He believes that he who gets angry and desires revenge, dissuaded by some consideration, immediately calms down' (*De Ira* 2.3.4).

Being aware of their personal tragedies, we cannot but feel sympathy and pity for the heroes who did not know any better and could not handle the fortunes they had fallen upon them. It has been argued that tragedies, specifically *Medea*, are not adequate examples to use for the Stoic Ethics, because of the madness and the cruelty the tragic figures display. On the contrary, exactly because of these qualities, tragedies manage to show the terrifying and dangerous nature of anger, which needs to be extirpated and healed even at the earliest stage, since it can summon all the evil and monstrous creatures from the Underworld. Furthermore, it meets the first requirement to cure our passion by revealing and depicting all these monsters, which represent anger. Only

if the agent brings her thoughts and mental processing forward, she will be able to detect the flawed reasoning, the mistake in thought, the ἁμάρτημα, which is about to infest her whole mind.

The relationship between Stoic psychology and the destructive passions of tragic heroes might be presented as physical manifestations of the passions described in the plays.[488] These physical manifestations drawn from the Senecan dramas follow physiognomic methods such as the description of the (deformed) face or posture, and the comparison of the angry or insane hero to an animal whose features attribute the equivalent disposition (*De Ira* 1.1.6).

Some physiognomic descriptions enhance the argument that Seneca deployed both physiognomic theories and Stoic physics to influence the audience, who, exactly like the man in front of the mirror, are already changed men. The enactment of certain tragic scenes operated as a rhetorics exercise for them, which had a philosophical content and message; to extirpate the passions since they caused so much evil and destruction. The audience was to detect the visual elements and evidence, read and interpret the human texts adequately, and form their conclusions.

The Monstrous in Seneca and the personification of *Ira* and *Furor* through physiognomic methods.

The concept of the monstrous[489] in Senecan drama is examined in the current chapter, along with the instructional value of its visual portrayal. Seneca's choice of tragedy as a vehicle for presenting his ideas to a larger audience was largely due to the genre's intimate association with ἔκπληξις τερατώδης, or the startling sensation a viewer experiences when confronted with a display of terrifying and frightful monsters and images on stage. Violence in the theatre was employed to provoke thought, titillate emotional response and attention. The function of the monstrous is twofold because it both provokes thought and shock or awe, and also shows the physical manifestation of the passions. Bartch argues that drama presents its audience with a rectifying mirror that shows their sins.[490]

The use of the shocking effect caused by the monstrous was known before Seneca.[491] However, Staley suggests that it was Seneca who brought *monstrum* a characteristic pattern of tragedy as a genre.[492] He parallels Seneca's drama with Martial's comment on the monstrous figures of tragedy: *Qui legis Oedipoden caligantemque Thyesten, / Colchidas et Scyllas, quid nisi monstra legis?* ('You who read of Oedipus and Thyestes, when he turned the sky dark, and of Medeas and Scyllas, of what do you read but monsters?' Martial, *Epigrams* 10.4.1-2),[493] as Seneca's characters are called monsters, they perform monstrous deeds, and each of

[488] Marti 1945, pp. 229-234, 243; Pratt 1948, p. 7.
[489] On etymology of the Latin *monstrum*, see Staley 2010, pp. 155-160.
[490] Bartsch 2006, p. 279.
[491] See Taplin 1977, pp. 44-46: Aeschylus was associated with the use of the monstrous (his ancient biography 7; Aristophanes, *Frogs*, *eterateuto* 384).
[492] Staley 2010, pp. 96-97.
[493] Translation can be drawn from Staley 2010, pp. 96-97, where he translates *Colhidas* as 'Medeas' since Medea was from Colchis.

his tragedies presents an 'unnatural and abnormal' event which 'shocks and calls for interpretation'.[494] The use of monstrous in Seneca has an emotional impact on the audience; it shocks them and causes wonder (*ἔκπληξις* and *δέος/wonder and φόβος*). Therefore, the use of the visual element in Seneca is twofold: it attracts the audience's attention through the intensity of the images the tragedy presents and causes an emotional reaction of fear and shock, which also causes wonder and curiosity; a need to interpret and explain what the *monstrum* really shows and means. By personifying the passions of *ira* and *furor*, Seneca manages to turn the audience's attention to the ugliness and violence of these mental states and also makes them wonder about the cause of anger and madness. The personification of the passions, the *monstra,* are either the characters themselves, such as Medea or Atreus, or figures such as the *Furiae* and ghosts. These figures show the spectators the facial and bodily disfigurement and the phenomenological ugliness of *ira* and *furor*, which, as seen earlier in the section on Stoic physics, in humans happens because of the nature of the passion and its impact on the face and body. Therefore, the audience can see how ugly and evil anger can make a person; it transforms them into monsters. Their fury makes them 'as monstrous as the Furies'.[495] Furthermore, the signs (*signa*) of *ira* and *furor*, such as their fierce look, their quick and hysterical movements, are emphatically stressed in Seneca's *De Ira*:

> *Ut scias autem non esse sanos quos ira possedit, ipsum illorum habitum intuere; nam ut furentium certa indicia sunt audax et minax vultus, tristis frons, torva facies, citatus gradus, inquietae manus, color versus, crebra et vehementius acta suspiria, ita irascentium eadem signa sunt: flagrant ac micant oculi, multus ore toto rubor exaestuante ab imis praecordiis sanguine, labra quatiuntur, dentes comprimuntur, horrent ac surriguntur capilli, spiritus coactus ac stridens, articulorum se ipsos torquentium sonus, gemitus mugitusque et parum explanatis vocibus sermo praeruptus et conplosae saepius manus et pulsata humus pedibus et totum concitum corpus "magnasque irae minasagens," foeda visu et horrenda facies depravantium se atque intumescentium.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 1.1.3-5.

Hence, this is the physiognomic picture of anger, which has turned into insanity. Seneca's tragic characters often resemble this picture (e.g. *Medea* 380-396).

The physical bodies serve as texts which signify the psychological state of the heroes. There is a primary semiotic function in the body,[496] which renders it a text conveying messages and information about the character

[494] Staley 2010, p. 96.
[495] Staley 2010, p. 116. See also Cohen 1996, p. 4 on the incorporation of passions.
[496] See a general overview of corporealisation and personification issues in Latin literature in: Dawson 2009). See pp. 189-232 on violence as text where she presents wounds and blood as written sign on the skin, blood (pp. 189-202) or wounds (pp. 203-210) as inscriptions, and bodies or parts of bodies as texts to be read and analysed and the use of *notae* which visually leave written messages of past crimes on the body similarly to the memories left in one's inner organ of the body, meaning the *φρήν* or diaphragm (pp. 210-214, and especially pp. 211-212 on Senecan *Phaidra*'s Hyppulitus's *notas* on his hand). See also pp. 75-153 on textualisation of the body and personification of the text or the genre of literature through corporealisation, pp. 154-188 on the view of actions of breaking apart ideas, editing, manipulation of images and other kinds of treatment of the text as violent to the latter similarly to violent actions against a living body (p. 187).

it represents to the audience.[497] Bexley analyses Seneca's *Phaedra* and *Oedipus* in view of physical identity, commenting that mental suffering leaves an imprint on the flesh and hence 'beautiful *corpora* break apart under the strain of moral ugliness,' and the function of the body as a text invites its 'decipherment' being a 'legible surface'.[498] Staley talks about Seneca creating 'verbal paintings';[499] Seneca's tragedies do not necessarily need to be performed to create an 'image' in the spectators' minds and have the desired emotional effects. I agree with the above statement, as Seneca's texts reveal strong images that create horror and wonder, which also aligns with the Stoic vividness concept; nevertheless, it is more reasonable for tragedies to have been performed, as they would increase the emotional impact on the audience.

Staley maintains that Seneca summons monsters from the Virgilian underworld to elucidate the inner soul.[500] Although I agree with the manifestation of the inner works of the soul in the monsters and the Furies of his tragedies, probably influenced by Virgil and the general tendency to use *monstra* in Rome, it would be difficult for my approach to be compatible with Staley's Freudian interpretation that the summoning of Furies reveals 'the otherwise invisible nature of forbidden emotions'.[501] Tragic characters' emotions, such as *ira* and *furor*, are not forbidden. On the contrary, they stem from a rational set of beliefs and judgements which are chosen and frequently exercised by the agents, who entertained them despite any thought that they were forbidden. Senecan drama's aim is not to show the audience that passions are forbidden but why they should not act upon them or indulge in them; he wants to show them the destructive consequences showing them not that they are forbidden but that they are dangerous and they are responsible to resist them or not; there is not an external power that forbids the passions or takes the blame. On the contrary, *furor* is 'peculiar to the mankind'.[502] There are no real monsters; only humans. The realisation of the human responsibility adds a tremendously important moral and educative dimension to the plays since the audience realises their own role in their fates.

Mans argues that the macabre scenes in Seneca's drama have a didactic use as they uplift and do not demoralise the audience as they shock and warn the spectators; he parallels Seneca's philosophical *De Ira* where one finds the Stoic message that they need to control their emotions and the macabre scenes in the tragedies, which come as a result of the defeat of reason.[503] Although the didactic use of the macabre scenes is evident, Mans does not show how the audience is guided to the Stoic message only by attending to the macabre element in the plays. Understandably, the macabre and monstrous elements shock and cause wonder to the audience. However, it is not clear that the explanation the audience gives to the protagonists' dubious actions would be proven by the Stoics. Especially in the case of an uninformed audience unfamiliar with Stoicism, the meaning

[497] Bexley 2022, p. 192.
[498] Bexley 2022, p. 193, esp. pp. 194-255 on *Phaedra*'s analysis and pp. 256-276 on *Oedipus*'s analysis.
[499] Staley 2010, p. 113.
[500] Staley 2010, p. 97.
[501] Staley 2010, p. 97. Staley distinguishes between his approach and Shiesaro's approach (2003); the former reveals forbidden emotions, whereas the latter talks about repressed desires. However, the term 'forbidden' again points to the act of repressing, even if the agent recognises their emotions. Especially then, they would suppress their emotions and desires if they recognised them as 'forbidden' in case they were determined to act upon them. Therefore, there is no real difference between the two terms, pointing to a Freudian approach to Seneca's drama.
[502] Mans 1984, p. 113.
[503] Mans 1984, p. 114.

would not be clear. A potential answer would be the role of a chorus as a guide model to approach the heroes' behaviours and actions, as discussed in the second chapter of the current thesis.

Paulo Alexandre Lima follows an existential approach and argues that the monstrous in Medea does not merely express the heroine's inner psychological sphere but is also linked to her 'existential search for recognition in the surrounding world' and its enactment manifests 'the dissolution of the social, religious and cosmic boundaries'.[504] Although Lima makes a good point on Medea's recognition by Jason through the realisation of her identity, which is riddled with monstrous past crimes, she attributes her actions to divine punishment for her involvement in the Argonautic expedition.[505] However, Medea's realisation of self and personality shows that her deeds result from her psychosynthesis and identity and not the vengeful or even lawful action of a deity. The monstrous element in her actions and her body indicates much more than just punishments from the gods; it delved deeper into the emotional causation of Medea's decisions and actions.

The notion of grotesque and horror has been associated with the absurd and meaningless in antithesis to tragedy, which hides a deeper meaning.[506] However, Staley argues that Seneca found a meaning behind the grotesque.[507] Indeed, Seneca makes use of the visual element of angry or mad faces and bodies of the tragic characters or the monsters he summons from the underworld, mainly the Furies, to shock his audience and guide them towards his philosophical approach to passions. The term *monstrum* is used to demonstrate and show the inner mental state of the characters and their insanity, which is manifested visually on their bodies and faces. They also warn the audience and stir an emotional reaction so that better comprehension is feasible.[508] There are three main theories of the grotesque, which focus on the visually warped reality, the abnormality of the body, or moral degradation.[509] A later analysis of the tragedies aims to indicate these functions through Seneca's use of physiognomic personifications and facial depictions as well as similes, metaphors and comparisons of human and animal behaviours.

Physical manifestations and personification of *Ira* and *Furor* in Senecan drama – *praemeditatio* and Stoic ἐνάργεια

Therefore, the monstrous spectacle in Seneca, which is a representation of the physical manifestation of *ira* and *furor*, provokes ἔκπληξις in the spectators and calls for thought. The audience is shocked and scared away by the consequences of the passions, but not extremely overwhelmed, which allows them to contemplate what they see. The physical and monstrous manifestations of passions are achieved through the facial expressions and the bodily gestures and movements of the angry or mad tragic characters and the personification of *ira* or *furor*, in the figure of *Furiae*. The present section examines instances drawn from the plays of the

[504] Lima 2021, p. 76.
[505] Lima 2021, p. 95-96.
[506] Kayser 1966, p. 186.
[507] Staley 2010, p. 114.
[508] Staley 2010, p. 120.
[509] See Staley 2010, pp. 112-120.

physical expressions of *ira* or *furor,* and the role of Furies in portraying the ideas of passions and madness. However, the horror and the *monstrum* in Seneca's plays imbue the audience's shock with moral improvement since they are specifically shown that *ira* brought *furor* and madness upon the heroes, which is something the other characters are afraid of or scorn with disapproval. They not only show their fear in front of the *monstra,* but they also analyse their source according to the Stoic account of passions, making the audience contemplate the emotional causation of *furor*.[510] In this way, the audience experiences an emotional reaction – fear and awe – in front of the *scelera* and the monstrosity of the tragic characters, which they get to examine and analyse; therefore, they work on their ethical development through their emotional development.[511]

However, a reader would still be puzzled about the way the horrifying descriptions, verbal or performed, might have an educative and moral impact on the audience. Therefore, an explanation of this mechanism prior to the analysis of the plays would be crucial for a better understanding of the argument. For this reason, I will discuss the concepts of *praemeditatio* and vividness through the lens of Seneca's plays and their moral impact on the audience.

The ultimate Stoic and Senecan goal was virtue and emotional tranquillity. However, virtue was not granted without effort: *virtus non contingit animo nisi instituto et edocto et ad summum adsidua exercitatione perducto. Ad hoc quidem, sed sine hoc nascimur et in optimis* ('Virtue is not vouchsafed to a soul unless that soul has been trained and taught, and by unremitting practice brought to perfection. For the attainment of this boon, but not in the possession of it, were we born.' *Epistles* 90.46; *Epistles* 95.5). We need not trust chance to improve but train ourselves morally: *"Nemo est casu bonus. Discenda virtus est.* ('No man is good by chance. Virtue is something which must be learned.' *Epistles* 123.16). Stoics used to implement various techniques and exercises to train their mind towards virtue and away from passions. An example was the already known but first systematised by Stoics,[512] practice called *praemeditatio futurorum malorum*, which means 'familiarizing oneself in imagination with misfortunes to come'.[513] *Praemeditatio* is a frequent exercise of bolstering one's mind in the face of the adversities fortune might bring: *Ergo adversus haec, quae incidere possunt etiam potentissimis, adhortare te et indura* ('Therefore, encourage and toughen your spirit against the mishaps that afflict even the most powerful.' *Epistles* 4.-7). By frequent repetition of adversities perceived as possible or current occurrences, one trains one's mind towards resilience and avoidance of passions even in front of the possibility of death: *Hoc cotidie meditare, ut possis aequo animo vitam relinquere* ('Rehearse this thought every day, that you may be able to depart from life contentedly'. *Epistles* 4.5). Edwards mentions[514] 'proper practice of philosophy' as 'preparation for death'[515] is evident in Seneca's *Marcia (De Consolatione ad Marciam* 23.2)*,* and that Seneca systematically mentions Socrates' death as a main example of *meditatio* in his *Epistles* (*Epistles*

[510] On emotional causation of madness, see more in Chapter 4.
[511] On the concept of οἰκείωσις and the connection between emotional and ethical development, see more in Chapter 1.
[512] Ker 2010, pp. 190-194. For mentions of meditation, see Marcus Aurelius, *Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν* 10.36; Epictetus, *Ἐπικτήτου διατριβαί* 2.1.38.
[513] Armisen-Marchetti 2008, p. 102. For *praemeditatio* see also Manning 1976, pp. 301–304.
[514] Edwards 2021, pp. 222–223.
[515] *SVF* 3.768: οἱ Στωικοὶ φιλόσοφοι…τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὑπέλαβον μελέτην εἶναι τοῦ φυσικοῦ θανάτου.

7.6, 13.14, 67.7–13, 70.9, 98.12). Edwards makes an interesting connection between *praemeditatio* and its physical impact as a mental image.[516] Below, Marcus Aurelius compares the eye to one's mind, which needs to see everything and practice both fortunate and unfortunate experiences:

> Τὸν ὑγιαίνοντα ὀφθαλμὸν πάντα ὁρᾶν δεῖ τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ μὴ λέγειν, "τὰ χλωρὰ θέλω." τοῦτο γὰρ ὀφθαλμιῶντός ἐστι. καὶ τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν ἀκοὴν καὶ ὄσφρησιν εἰς πάντα δεῖ τὰ ἀκουστὰ καὶ ὀσφραντὰ ἑτοίμην εἶναι. καὶ τὸν ὑγιαίνοντα στόμαχον πρὸς πάντα τὰ τρόφιμα ὁμοίως ἔχειν, ὡς μύλην πρὸς πάντα, ὅσα ἀλέσουσα κατεσκεύασται. καὶ τοίνυν τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν διάνοιαν πρὸς πάντα δεῖ τὰ συμβαίνοντα ἑτοίμην εἶναι· ἡ δὲ λέγουσα, "Τὰ τεκνία σωζέσθω," καὶ "πάντες, ὅ τι ἂν πράξω, ἐπαινείτωσαν," ὀφθαλμός ἐστι τὰ χλωρὰ ζητῶν ἢ ὀδόντες τὰ ἁπαλά.[517]
>
> Marcus Aurelius, *Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν* 10.35.

The eye of the mind needs to be trained with repetitive familiarisation with adversities; it creates a vivid mental image that leads to emotional and moral maturity. Edwards astutely tailors the practice of *praemeditatio* and *exemplum* with Stoic theories of φαντασία and perception, as she makes a case about Seneca's 'presentation of the power of *exempla* and *praemeditatio* in action, as an acknowledgement, indeed an exploitation, of the embodied nature of cognition'.[518] Edwards associates the act of *praemeditatio* with the function of the imago and φαντασία. The practice of *praemeditatio* corrects the erroneous judgements of the φαντασίαι, which are the 'representational images of the mind' (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.51),[519] and they develop by 'perception or internal mental activity'.[520] These representations have a physical impact, like imprints (τυπώσεις, Euseb. *PraEpistles evang*. 15.20.2 in *SVF* 1.141) since the mind and the passions are corporeal (*Epistles*106.5-6), a principle which is in alignment with the Stoic tradition:[521]

> Τὴν δὲ φαντασίαν εἶναι τύπωσιν ἐν ψυχῇ, τοῦ ὀνόματος οἰκείως μετενηνεγμένου ἀπὸ τῶν τύπων <τῶν> ἐν τῷ κηρῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ δακτυλίου γινομένων. τῆς δὲ φαντασίας τὴν μὲν καταληπτικήν, τὴν δὲ ἀκατάληπτον· καταληπτικὴν μέν, ἣν κριτήριον εἶναι τῶν πραγμάτων φασί, τὴν γινομένην ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος κατ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπεσφραγισμένην καὶ ἐναπομεμαγμένην· ἀκατάληπτον δὲ τὴν μὴ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος, ἢ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος μέν, μὴ κατ᾽ αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ ὑπάρχον· τὴν μὴ τρανῆ μηδὲ ἔκτυπον.
>
> Diog. Laert. *Lives* 7.45–46

[516] Edwards 2021.
[517] All translations of Maurcus Aurelius' *Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν* can be drawn from Haines 1916.
[518] Edwards 2021, p. 224.
[519] Inwood 1985, p. 56.
[520] Edwards 2021, p. 224.
[521] For the Stoic principle that the mind is corporeal, see LS 53B = Hierocles 1.5–33, 4.38–53; Inwood 2007. For the passions being corporeal, see Andronicus, On Passions 1 = SVF 3.391 = LS 65; LS 65A = Stob. 2.88.8, where passions are described as movements of the soul.

One needs to correct the false interpretations and responses to the representations, the impressions (φαντασίαι),[522] and examine the value assigned to these appearances (Diogenes Laertius 7.111; Epict. *Diss*. 1.1.7, 2.1.4; 3.1.40).[523] Long and Edwards suggest that a loyal Stoic would train their character by employing the representations using them as means to check their responses so that they can correct them and adjust them accordingly to their ethical principles.[524] Therefore, 'our preconceptions could be tackled with reason'[525] through experiencing our immediate first responses to representations which seem terrifying at first, but in reality, they do not pertain to virtue. Therefore, by checking our first movements, προπάθειαι, to φαντασίαι, we can train ourselves to emotional resilience. The images and representations of imaginary situations created in Seneca's plays, as examples, are the ideal means to test one's character and reactions in a safe and detached environment, from the audience's position.

Seneca, believes that the spectacles which are displayed have the most significant impact, as he prompts his readers to imagine tortures and visualise pain:[526]

> *Nam quemadmodum plus agit tortor, quo plura instrumenta doloris exposuit (specie enim vincuntur qui patientia restitissent); ita ex iis, quae animos nostros subigunt et domant, plus proficiunt, quae habent quod ostendant.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 14.6.

Indeed, Seneca employs the impact of visualisation of misfortunes to build resilience, quoting a Virgilian verse (Vergil, *Aeneid*, 6.103) to enhance his argument:

> *"Non ulla laborum,*
> *O virgo, nova mi facies inopinave surgit;*
> *Omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ipse peregi.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 76.33.

There is no sudden misfortune left to take one by surprise, as they have already imagined and brought everything in front of their inner eye, their imagination, proactively. They have examined and prevented every evil beforehand so that no novel evil can defeat their mind now:

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[522] Graver 2007, pp. 24-26.
[523] See Long 1991, p. 103.
[524] Long 1991, p. 117; Edwards 2021, p. 227. See Diog. Laert. 7.45–46, 111–14.
[525] Edwards 2021, p. 227.
[526] For an analysis on the visualisation of pain in Seneca, see Edwards 2021, pp. 227-233.

Tu hodie ista denuntias; ego semper denuntiavi mihi et hominem paravi ad humana." Praecogitati mali mollis ictus venit. At stultis et fortunae credentibus omnis videtur nova rerum et inopinata facies; magna autem pars est apud imperitos mali novitas. Hoc ut scias, ea quae putaverant aspera, fortius, cum adsuevere, patiuntur. Ideo sapiens adsuescit futuris malis et quae alii diu patiendo levia faciunt, hic levia facit diu cogitando.

Seneca, *Epistles* 76.33-35.

Furthermore, Edwards argues that in observing experiences, the visual enmeshes with a 'somato-sensory component' as she quotes from a neuroscientist's research, according to which 'imagination is a mental simulation'.[527] The practice of *praemeditatio*, which features vivid examples, then, 'works to tune in to the imagined exemplar's experience'.[528] However, Cairns points to the difference between the emotions of the audience and the observers and the emotions of the agents on stage.[529] These are not to be identified; Indeed, Seneca talks about an 'as if' experience when experiencing poetry, which does not stir real πάθη but only their preliminary sensations, the pre-passions. Hence, The prefix 'pre-' in *praemeditatio*, also indicates to something tat happens beforehand. It means that one proactively creates a mental image and imagines a difficult situation as if it were present. It would be interesting to think about a possible connection between *praemeditatio*'s prefix and the concept of προπάθειαι, the first movements of passions, which also begins with the prefix 'προ-', meaning something which comes earlier. For Seneca, among other Stoics, passions were movements: *Adfectus sunt motus animi inprobabiles* ('Passions are reprehensible movements of the spirit' *Epistles* 75.12),[530] which are also corporeal (*Epistles* 106.5-7). Prepassions are also physical involuntary sensory feelings. The sensory and tuning in function of *praemeditatio*, and the physical aspect of pre-passions[531] which are stirred by the vivid tragic examples due to mental stimulation which is activated by imagination, renders Seneca's poetry the perfect tool to Stoic *praemeditatio*.[532] Through the tragic examples in Seneca's poetry, the agent would be able to practice *praemeditatio* and tune in with the tragic characters by experiencing their own prepassions, an 'as-if' experience of the characters' emotional responses. We shall endure and wait for the virtue: *Nos non advocabimus patientiam, quos tantum praemium expectat, felicis animi immota tranquillitas?* ('Shall we, then, not summon ourselves to endurance when so great a reward awaits us—the unbroken calm of the happy soul?' *De Ira* 2.12.6).

[527] Edwards 2021, p. 234: Gallese and Lakoff 2005, p. 458.
[528] Edwards 2021, p. 235.
[529] Cairns 2015. See also Webb 1997, pp. 122-123.
[530] Translation can be drawn from Edwards 2021, p. 224 n.19.
[531] Graver 2007, Chapter 4.
[532] Edwards has noticed the repetition of the phrase in *rem praesentem* in various passages written by Seneca (Edwards 2021, p. 236).

The concept of ἐνάργεια (vividness)[533] was well known among the rhetoricians and the Stoics. According to it, there was a connection between the images, imagination stirred by verbal representations, and emotions:[534]

> *Rem verbis quam maxime ante oculos eius apud quem dicitur ponimus, ut id quod indignum est proinde illi videatur indignum ac si ipse interfuerit ac praesens viderit.*
>
> Cicero, *De Inventione* 1.104.

In rhetoric, verbal images, then, have an emotional impact on the audience.[535] Quintilian also remarks that the orator causes intense emotions in their audience, connecting imagination and emotion with the aid of ἐνάργεια:

> *Summa enim, quantum ego quidem sentio, circa movendos adfectus in hoc posita est, ut moveamur ipsi. Nam et luctus et irae et indignationis aliquando etiam ridicula fuerit imitatio, si verba vultumque tantum, non etiam animum accommodarimus.*
>
> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.26.

Quintilian argues in favour of assimilating to emotions in order to give an impression of reality (*Quare, in iis quae esse veri similia volemus, simus ipsi similes eorum qui vere patiuntur adfectibus,* Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.27) and implementing the Greek ἐνάργεια:

> *Quas φαντασίας Graeci vocant (nos sane visiones appellemus), per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur, has quisquis bene ceperit is erit in adfectibus potentissimus.*
>
> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.29-30.

Later on, Quintilian mentions the man people call εὐφαντασίωτον because he imagines situations as if he is experiencing them and later on performs actions (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.30). More interestingly, he adds:

> *hoc animi vitium ad utilitatem non transferemus [ad hominem]. 31Occisum queror: non omnia quae in re praesenti accidisse credibile est in oculis habebo? non percussor ille subitus erumpet? non expavescet circumventus, exclamabit vel rogabit vel fugiet? non ferientem, non concidentem videbo? non animo sanguis et pallor et gemitus, extremus denique expirantis hiatus insidet?*

[533] For the concept of ἐνάργεια, see Webb 1997.
[534] Vasaly 1993, pp. 95-97.
[535] Webb 1997; Goldhill 2007.

Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.30-31.

Hence, the vivid description of heinous actions, such as murder, brings the latter in front of one's eyes and imprints it on one's mind.[536] It is significant to note that sensory and physiognomical traits are also imprinted in one's mind, such as pallor and groans. The imprint (ἐντύπωσις, mental represantation) lead to ethical realisations and moral lessons.

> *Insequetur ἐνάργεια, quae a Cicerone inlustratio et evidentia nominatur, quae non tam dicere videtur quam ostendere, et adfectus non aliter quam si rebus ipsis intersimus sequentur.*

Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.32.

Experiencing emotions is an important factor for the agent to have this as-if experience. Quintilian also quotes poetic verses from Virgil's *Aeneid* (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.32-33: Virgil, *Aeneid* 9.476; 11.40; 11.89; 10.782), where the poet imagines instances of death (Virgil, *Aeneid* 10.7820). This implies that verbal descriptions in poetry can activate ἐνάργεια. Seneca, also mentioned in his *De Ira*, that poetry can cause semi-emotions, feelings which are preliminary to passions, and they also provide the agent with an as-if experience of the passion. Furthermore, Quintilian goes on:

> *Nos illi simus quos gravia indigna tristia passos queremur, nec agamus rem quasi alienam, sed adsumamus parumper illum dolorem: ita dicemus quae in nostro simili 35casu dicturi essemus. Vidi ego saepe histriones atque comoedos, cum ex aliquo graviore actu personam deposuissent, flentes adhuc egredi. Quod si in alienis scriptis sola pronuntiatio ita falsis accendit adfectibus, quid nos faciemus, qui illa cogitare debemus ut moveri periclitantium vice possimus?*

Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.34-35.

The experience of emotions caused by mental representations either on stage or in poetry cause an identification with the tragic character and a series of thoughts about how to act or think in their shoes. The process of problematizing promotes ethical development though emotional development. On the manipulation of emotions Quintilian has been argued to contend against the Stoic philosophers in particular (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.1.7; Cic. *De Or*. 1.227–228;1.1230.).[537] Also, this technique was frequently used by orators and rhetoricians, which must have been included in Seneca's education and training.[538] In addition, Bartsch argues that Seneca's

[536] For Quintilian and the activation of the mind's eye, see Webb 1997; Leigh 2004.
[537] Atherton 1988, pp. 404-405; Leigh 2004, p. 131; Edwards 2021, p. 240.
[538] Griffin 1992, pp. 53-54; Armisen-Marchetti 2008, p. 106.

work is riddled with recurring horrifying images so that the vivid images cultivate a healthy reasoning and moral development.[539] Indeed, Seneca tailors the act of repetition and εναργεια by bringing evil in front of one's eyes against the sudden impression brought by chance:

> *Cogitanda ergo sunt omnia et animus adversus ea, quae possunt evenire, firmandus. Exilia, tormenta morbi, bella, naufragia meditare. Potest te patriae, potest patriam tibi casus eripere, potest te in solitudines abigere, potest hoc ipsum, in quo turba suffocatur, fieri solitudo. Tota ante oculos sortis humanae condicio ponatur, nec quantum frequenter evenit, sed quantum plurimum potest evenire, praesumamus animo, si nolumus opprimi nec illis inusitatis velut novis obstupefieri; in plenum cogitanda fortuna est.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 91.7-8.

Furthermore, except for the use of examples, a physiognomical aspect of Seneca's plays pertains to the comparison of the mental states of men with animalistic behaviours, especially through similes and metaphors.[540] Seneca believes that comparisons bring the agent face to face with various matters and have argumentative and ethical value:

> *Illi, qui simpliciter et demonstrandae rei causa eloquebantur, parabolis referti sunt, quas existimo necessarias, non ex eadem causa qua poetis, sed ut inbecillitatis nostrae adminicula sint, ut et dicentem et audientem in rem praesentem adducant.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 59.6-7.

Seneca puts into practice the philosophical use of physiognomical comparisons of animals and human behaviours. He compares the source of anger in men, which is a rational mechanism of misjudging the value of externals, with the behaviour of animals, and he emphasises the first beginnings of the passion, which are harmless:

> *Quanto melius est initia ipsa perspicere quam levia sint, quam innoxia! Quod accidere vides animalibus mutis, idem in homine deprendes; frivolis turbamur et inanibus. Taurum color rubicundus excitat, ad umbram aspis exsurgit, ursos leonesque mappa proritat; omnia, quae natura fera ac rabida sunt, consternantur ad vana. Idem inquietis et stolidis ingeniis evenit. Rerum suspicione feriuntur, adeo*

[539] Bartsch 2007, p. 91.
[540] For the use of similes and metaphors in Seneca, see Edwards 2021, p. 237.

quidem, ut interdum iniurias vocent modica beneficia, in quibus frequentissima, certe acerbissima iracundiae materia est.

Seneca, *De Ira* 3.30.1-2.

Seneca explains the mechanism and the early beginnings of the passions, the early signs of προπάθειαι, which are harmless if not indulged, through similes and comparisons to bulls and lions, which was also a physiognomical method.[541] Indeed, the source of anger does not need to be great: *Nec refert quantum sit ex quo surrexerit; ex levissimis enim in maxima evadit.* ('And the source from which it springs need not be great; for rising from most trivial things it mounts to monstrous size.' *De Ira* 3.1.5). In the analysis of the plays below, there are examples of similes and physiognomical comparisons of human passions and animalistic behaviours, such as that of a tigress in *Medea* and *Thyestes* (*Medea* 853-865; *Thyestes* 707-715). Furthermore, the comparison and similes or metaphors with monsters instead of animals would enhance the vehemence and monstrosity of *furor*. The comparison of the above passages and the plays is also a strong piece of evidence that Seneca's plays were in alignment with his philosophical prose, as the same physiognomical method is applied and implemented in the plays.

<u>*Medea*</u>

Medea is riddled with both facial and bodily expressions of anger and madness, but also personification of *furor* in *Furiae* is evident. The Furies were known as the angry and manic deities who thirst for revenge, a figure commonly used in the genre of tragedy. The monstrous appearances provoke fear and awe in the audience. The emotional reactions in view of the monstrous appearances of minor characters in the play, such as Creon, Jason or the Nurse in *Medea* are guides to what the physical manifestations of *ira* and *furor* provoke, which is fear and awe. Right at the start of the play, Medea calls the Furies to help her kill the royal family, describing their horrid image:

nunc, nunc adeste, sceleris ultrices deae,
crinem solutis squalidae serpentibus,
atram cruentis manibus amplexae facem;
adeste, thalamis horridae quondam meis
quales stetistis.[542]

Seneca, *Medea* 13-17.

[541] For a further analysis of the physiognomical methods and the physiognomical similes of animals, see Evans 1969; 1950.
[542] The translation can be drawn by Wilson 2010, p. 73.

Furiae hold a black torch which symbolises the *scelera*, the crimes, blood and the disaster that are about to bring upon humans. Metaphorically, Medea will transform into a *Furia* herself in the sense that she will be as angry and mad as the Furies in her attempt to avenge Jason: *Querelas verbaque in cassum sero? / non ibo in hostes? manibus excutiam faces / caeloque lucem!* ('Am I stringing together futile words and complaints? Shall I not attack my enemies? I shall dash the bridal torches from their hands, and the light from heaven.' *Medea* 26-28). Also, Lynd focuses on the language Jason uses to describe Medea as a *Furia*: *furit, / fert odia prae se* (*Medea* 445-446) to argue that words such as *furor*, *furiae* and *furere* act as 'tragic markers' in the plays.[543] Similarly, when Creon faces Medea, determined to send her to exile, his reaction conveys Medea's fierce appearance and disposition, caused by her rage: *Fert gradum contra ferox / minaxque nostros propius affatus petit. / arcete, famuli, tactu et accessu procul, / iubete sileat.regium imperium pati / aliquando discat. (*'Wild thing! She wants to attack me; she threatens me, comes nearer, wants to talk. Stop her, you guards, keep her away, no touching; tell her to be quiet. Time she leant to submit to royal power.' *Medea* 186-190.).[544] And immediately after, he addresses Medea: *Vade veloci viamonstrumque saevum horribile iamdudum avehe!* ('Go quickly on your way! This monster has been here too long; take it away!' *Medea* 190-191).[545] Creon reveals Medea's monstrous appearance; she is a horror which evokes fear. He shows how Medea is perceived not only by him but also by the audience. Therefore, the most likely scenario is that the horrendous appearance of Medea or a *Furia* scares the audience off the passions or *ira* and *furor* that overwhelm the heroine.

Also, the nurse exclaims *Sonuit ecce vesano gradu / canitque* ('Listen! You can hear her crazy feet.' *Medea* 738-737)[546] as Medea prepares her murderous poisons. She is in a delirious state, which is shown in the way she walks; 'her crazy feet' which produce sound. Both the movement of her feet and the sound they make indicate the frenzied state of her mind. Later on, in the same scene during the deleterious ritual, Medea describes her appearance as she summons various gods and figures, Danaids, the moon (and hence, Hecate or Diana) among them: *Tibi more gentis vinculo solvens comam / secreta nudo nemora lustravi pede (*'For you I have loosened my hair and bared my foot to sway as my people do through the secret parts of the wood.' *Medea* 752-753),[547] and also *Tibi haec cruenta serta texuntur manu, / novena quae serpens ligat* ('For you I weave these wreaths with bloody hand, wreaths bound up with serpents nine.' *Medea* 771-772).[548] Medea resembles and acts like a Furia causing worry and fear to the Nurse. The above descriptions in conjunction with the chthonic atmosphere of the ritual enhance the imposing feeling of Medea's maddened. A mixture of anger and insanity is revealed and leads her to realise her schemes.

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[543] Lynd 2012, p. 74.
[544] Trans. by Wilson (2010). Fitch 2002: 'She advances fiercely against me, and with a threatening air seeks closer speech. Keep her away, servants, well away from contact or access; bid her be silent. She must finally learn to endure a king's authority.' Wilson's translation uses the verb 'submit' whereas in Fitch 2002 translates the verb as 'endure'. Both translations showcase Stoic influences since Reason submits to Passion and one should endure their fate according to Stoic principles.
[545] Translation of lines 190-191in Fitch 2002 is as follows: 'Depart with haste, and remove at long last a savage and fearful horror!' Both translations show the fear and horror Medea provokes as she is a *monstrum*, a monster.
[546] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 93.
[547] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 94.
[548] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 94.

Later, Seneca's voice through the chorus calls Medea the greater evil of the sea: *maiusque mari Medea malum* (*Medea*, 363). Seneca compares Medea to the evil grandeur of the sea, which encompasses the monsters Scylla and the Sirens:

> *Quid cum Siculi virgo Pelori,*
> *rabidos utero succincta canes,*
> *omnes pariter solvit hiatus?*
> *quis non totos horruit artus*
> *totiens uno latrante malo?*[549]
>
> Seneca, *Medea,* 350-354.

Scylla's description provokes terror to her observers who *shudder and tremble*. Their physical reaction to the terrifying appearance of Scylla betrays their state of mind. In addition, Scylla's appearance indicates her monstrosity, which Medea surpasses. The same is valid in case of the slightly more flattering description of Sirens who slyly lure their victims with their voices: *Quid cum Ausonium dirae pestesvoce canora mare mulceren.... solitam cantu retinere rates* ('What of the time when those dangerous females brought peace to the sea, with melodious voices….although her habit was to trap ships with her voice?' *Medea* 355-356, 359).[550] Medea is one of the most dangerous woman, the most dangerous of all; luring their victims with the aid of her monstrous schemes and the façade of the one who leaves peacefully, sending gifts to the happy couple, Jason and Creusa. In lines 406-410, there is another comparison of Medea and her rage to the two monsters Scylla and Charybdis and even to Etna: *numquam meus cessabit in poenas furor, / crescetque semper. quae ferarum immanitas, / quae Scylla, quae Charybdis Ausonium mare / Siculumque sorbens, quaeve anhelantem premens / Titana tantis Aetna fervebit minis?* ('Never will my bitter rage fall short of total vengeance; no, it will always grow. What vast wild beast, What Scylla or Charybdis, who drained deep the seas, or Etna, crushing he panting Titan, will boil up with threats as vast as mine?' *Medea* 406-410).[551] Through a physiognomic comparison and monster simile, Seneca promotes his Stoic belief that anger keeps craving for destruction, is unstoppable and uncontrolled: *aeque enim impotens sui est* (*De Ira* 1.1.20). However, the audience does not need to know it in advance, as it sees the monster Medea becomes and immediately is scared away from the passions.

The greatest perhaps physiognomical description of the angry and mad Medea is revealed in Nurse's worried words in lines 380-396. Here we have both a comparison to a Maenad and the physiological description of the appearance when under the influence of anger, which leads to madness and therefore Medea exhibits similar features with a Maenad as with the Furia. The nurse observes Medea rushing out of the house and, afraid of an upcoming evil, she begs her to control her anger (*impetum*) and herself in vain (*Alumna, celerem quo rapis tectis*

[549] Translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 82.
[550] The translation can be taken from Wilson 2010, p. 82.
[551] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 84.

pedem? / resiste et iras comprime ac retine impetum (*Medea* 380-381)*,* and mentions her similarity to a Maenad and her current state of mind, which is mad, crazed and ecstatic (*insanit, Medea* 383):

> *Incerta qualis entheos gressus tulit*
> *cum iam recepto maenas insanit deo*
> *Pindi nivalis vertice aut Nysae iugis,*
> *talis recursat huc et huc motu effero,*
> *furoris ore signa lymphati gerens.*
> *flammata facies, spiritum ex alto citat,*
> *proclamat, oculos uberi fletu rigat,*
> *renidet; omnis specimen affectus capit.*
> *haeret minatur aestuat queritur gemit.*
>
> Seneca, *Medea* 382-390.

Medea's face is the most significant physiological sign of her *furor* (*furoris ore signa lymphati gerens, Medea* 386). All the emotions pass over her face (*Medea* 389-390), which is a sign of an unstable mind. The spectator can see that Medea is a personified madness- such as a Furia – who is capable only of evil, as the nurse can see in Medea's face the face of *Furor* (*vultum Furoris cerno, Medea* 396):

> *quo pondus animi verget? ubi ponet minas?*
> *ubi se iste fluctus franget? exundat furor.*
> *non facile secum versat aut medium scelus:*
> *se vincet. irae novimus veteris notas.*
> *magnum aliquid instat, efferum immane*
> *impium.*
> *vultum Furoris cerno.*[552] *di fallant metum!*[553]
>
> Seneca, *Medea* 391-396.

The audience is not left room for a different approach to Medea's outer and inner appearance; they are to be afraid (*di fallant metum! Medea* 396) and warned off the cause of the *furor*, which is *ira* as explained by the nurse. The Nurse knows Medea and she can recognise (*notas*) both the cause, which is *Ira,* and the result – *Furor*. The Latin word *notas* is of great importance due to its meaning and its philosophical depth here. *Notas* derives from the Latin verb *nosco*, which is associated with the noun *nota* (a 'signal' or a 'sign'), which emphasises the physiognomical and educative role of *Medea.*[554] *Nosco* among other interpretations, means 'to ascertain to be (a person or thing)

[552] Wilson 2010 translates as 'Passion,' whereas Fitch 2002 translates as 'Rage'.
[553] The translation of *Medea* 380-396 can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 83.
[554] Glare 1982, s.vv. *nosco*, *nota*.

that one has seen before or has previous knowledge of, recognize' and 'to be familiar with through experience or report, be acquainted with (persons or things)' and more specifically 'to know the character of (persons, etc.)' or '(with *pred.*) to know from experience to be'. Therefore, the Nurse recognises a condition on Medea's face, her passion, which she has seen before and is a trait of Medea's character. The evidence that the passion of *ira* has happened before, since the Nurse recognises it on Medea's face, reveals that *ira* and *furor* are exercised frequently by Medea. The Nurse begged Medea to suppress her anger at the beginning of the passage, but it was already late; after Medea indulged in her anger, it transformed into *Furor*, which, as anger, goes only forward and ends up in terrible deeds (*exundat furor, Medea* 392). Seneca in his *De Ira* explained that *ira* is a brief madness and that *ira* does not stop being destructive; *Furor* is even more damaging than *ira* as it is only the beginning of madness, which is the inner state of the agent who has these *notas*, these signs on their face, since anger and *furor* disfigure the face and make it ugly (*De Ira* 2.35.1-6). The interpretation of the noun *nota* would also reinforce the above argument since *nota* means 'a mark attached, imprinted, etc., in order to identify or distinguish' like 'a natural sign (visible or not) by which one recognizes a person or thing, (especially) an identifying mark (on the body), (pl.) a person's features'. It can also mean 'an indication, sign, token (of some fact, quality, condition, etc.)' or 'a verbal indication, hint, suggestion' and very interestingly 'a mark used to represent a sound, letter, word, etc., a symbol, character' or '(pl., in full ~ae *litterarum*) written characters, lettering: (also sg. *in collective sense*)', 'a shorthand character', 'per ~as *scribere,* to write in a kind of cipher'. Most importantly, *nota* is a 'signal' or a 'sign'.

After Medea's ritual is done, the chorus realises that she schemed an evil plan from her appearance, which once again is terrifying, maddened, and compares Medea to a *blood-stained Maenad* paying attention to her violent movement and her fierceness (*Quonam cruenta maenas / praeceps amore saevo / rapitur? quod impotent / facinus parat furore? Medea* 849-852). The chorus mentions another passion, *amore saevo* (*Medea* 850), which feeds Medea's anger and leads her to violent *furor*. The fluidity between passions is common in Stoic philosophy and Senecan plays.[555] Here, the chorus indirectly comments on love and lust; they call Medea's love barbaric or savage, *saevo* (*Medea* 850). It is clear that the chorus does not like Medea, who has not been accepted because she is a foreigner and a danger to them; she has not managed to bridle her love for Jason, nor her *ira* or *furor*, which is disapproved by them, and by the audience by extension. Once again, the audience has to examine the concept of unkempt love and lust and ponder where it can lead. Medea's face again is the marker which shows her psychological state and causes fear:

vultus citatus ira
riget, et caput feroci
quatiens superba motu
regi minatur ultro.
quis credat exulem?

[555] On the transformation of love or sadness into *ira*, see Chapter 1 and the commendation of the choruses in *Phaedra* in Chapter 2 in the current thesis.

Flagrant genae rubentes,
pallor fugat ruborem.
nullum vagante forma
servat diu colorem.
huc fert pedes et illuc,
ut tigris orba natis
cursu furente lustrat
Gangeticum nemus.[556]

Seneca, *Medea* 853-865.

More detailed is Medea's face illustrated; it has been overcome with anger and it changes colours and shapes constantly bringing into the audience's mind a maddened person in a delirium, an image compatible with Seneca's description of anger in his *De Ira (De Ira* 1.1.1),[557] as in lines 849-854 where the chorus describes the symptoms of anger. Medea is also compared to a tigress which has lost her cubs, a very common physiognomical comparison.[558] There might even be an ethnological remark of physiognomy since her barbarian ancestry and the latter's characteristic fierceness are again mentioned; *seized by barbarian lust* (*Medea* 850). It is worth noting that the chorus wonders in surprise who would ever believe that Medea was an exile. Given her appearance and her expressions, who could be fooled so much that they would fall into her trap? This question, along with serving the plot purposes, also indicates that the mental state of an individual can be traced on their face, expression and physique. Also, the chorus gives the audience a hint to be cautious of Medea's appearance, which betrays her intentions; they make them think of what the appearance might hide, so they incite them to examine what they see.

Another instance of anger's facial physicalisation is conveyed through Jason's words, who can also discern Medea's *furor* from her appearance: *atque ecce, viso memet exiluit, furit, / fert odia prae se; totus in vultu est dolor (*'And look, now she sees me, she jumps, in a towering rage. She shows how much she hates me: all her bitterness in her face.' *Medea* 445-446).[559] Here, again the delineation of the πάθος on the face is apparent and clearly uttered through Jason. The latter can see, as Medea approaches, the deformation of her face in front of the sight of him. To her mind, he is the reason for her suffering, hence the reason for her anger, and when she sees him, her anger grows again and leaves its print on her face. Jason gives the audience a clue of how to interpret Medea's face and state; he is terrified and appalled by her fierce anger and aggression towards him. It is threatening and damaging, and the audience is called to receive Medea's *monstrum* on her face as such. Therefore, Jason's reaction to Medea's

[556] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, pp. 96-97.
[557] Lynd 2012, p. 97 parallels the language Seneca use in both descriptions of anger in Medea's face as *citatus ira* and the compound adjective *concitatus* in the *De Ira* 1.1.1). He also compares the language used in the description of Medea's pacing *huc fert pedes et illuc* (862) and the use of the adjective *incursitantem in* the personification of anger in the *De Ira* 2.35.5.
[558] See Evans 1969.
[559] The translation can be taken from Wilson 2010, p. 85.

furor and *ira* within the play, as the Nurse's, the chorus's and Creon's, functions as a deterrent from passion for the audience, adding a moral dimension to the play. Similarly, and more explicitly, the nurse, all worried, exclaims that 'her soul is terrified; it shudders' now that 'evil is near'; she feels helpless in front of her mistress's bitterness that increases so radically (*Pavet animus, horret: magna pernicies adest. / immane quantum augescit, Medea* 670-671).[560]

Hercules Furens

In *Hercules Furens*,[561] similarly to the scene in *Medea* where she summons the goddesses and figures from the Underworld, Juno calls upon the Furies to carry out her nefarious scheme. She describes their horrific, enraged appearance in her speech: *adsint ab imo Tartari fundo excitae / Eumenides, ignem flammeae spargant comae, / viperea saevae verbera incutiant manus.* ('Come, from the very depths of Tartarus, Furies, scatter fire with your hair of flame, Shake your snaky torches in your savage hands.' *Hercules Furens* 86-88).[562] Here, the Furies are also another impersonation of Juno's *ira* and thirst for revenge, which is the reason she summons all the infernal forces from the Underworld:

> *Hic tibi ostendam inferos.*
> *revocabo in alta conditam caligine,*
> *ultra nocentum exilia, discordem deam,*
> *quam munit ingens montis oppositi latus;*
> *educam et imo Ditis e regno extraham*
> *quidquid relictum est: veniet invisum Scelus*
> *suumque lambens sanguinem Impietas ferox*
> *Errorque et in se semper armatus Furor—*
> *hoc hoc ministro noster utatur dolor.*[563]
>
> Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 91-99.

In Juno's speech, there is an intense element of impersonation of abstract ideas, such as Crime, Treachery, and, more importantly, Madness and Passion. The Furies are the impersonations of Juno's *Furor* and *Ira*, which is the most destructive passion. Indeed she encourages the Furies to take revenge, with the leading guide Megaera who is the Fury of Jealous Rage, a suitable match for Juno's emotional state:

> *Incipite, famulae Ditis, ardentem incitae*

[560] The translation can be taken from Wilson 2010, p. 91.
[561] All translations of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* can be drawn from Fitch 2002, unless otherwise stated.
[562] The translation can be taken from Wilson 2010, p. 143.
[563] The translation can be taken from Wilson 2010, p. 143

concutite pinum, et agmen horrendum anguibus
Megaera ducat atque luctifica manu
vastam rogo flagrante corripiat trabem.
hoc agite, poenas petite vitiatae Stygis.
concutite pectus, acrior mentem excoquat
quam qui caminis ignis Aetnaeis furit;[564]

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 100-106.

In reality, Megaera is the impersonation of Juno's jealousy and rage; again the images of snakes and burning torches associated with the Furies are present (*anguibus, Hercules Furens* 101). Juno prompts Megaera to grab a timber from the fire (*Hercules Furens* 102-103) and then to let her mind burn with fire (*acrior mentem excoquat, Hercules Furens* 105). She encourages the passion of *ira* and madness in Megaera (*furore, Hercules Furens* 108) by drawing a parallel between the fire and the burning passion. By encouraging the Furiae, she encourages herself to give in to her passion as she explicitly reveals:

ut possit animum captus Alcides agi,
magno furore percitus, vobis prius
insaniendum est.—Iuno, cur nondum furis?
me me, sorores, mente deiectam mea
versate primam, facere si quicquam apparo
dignum noverca.[565]

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 107-112.

Juno confirms herself that Megaera is the impersonation of *ira* and *furore* since she calls her *magno furore (Hercules Furens* 108*)*. She prompts them to go mad (*vobis prius / insaniendum est, Hercules Furens* 108-109) and then she wants to make the start and be the first to lose her mind (*Hercules Furens* 110-112) giving her assent to the passion and the accompanying madness.

As before, *ira* and *furore* state their presence on the physical environment and the 'face' has features as a strong vehicle of passions. In lines 939-952, Hercules notices a natural change as darkness spreads throughout the day (*medium diem cinxere Tenebrae, Hercules Furens* 939-940). Hercules talks about Phoebus and the night's black face (*Phoebus obscuro meatsine nube vultu (Hercules Furens* 940-941), and *unde nox atrum caputignota*

[564] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 143.
[565] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, pp. 143-144.

profert? Hercules Furens 942-943). The black sky foresees the upcoming *scelus*. Later, he observes the constellations that remind him of his labours, as the Lion is equated[566] here to the constellation of Leo:

Primus en noster labor
caeli refulget parte non minima Leo
iraque totus fervet et morsus parat.
iam rapiet aliquod sidus: ingenti minax
stat ore et ignes efflat et rutilat, iubam
cervice iactans; quidquid autumnus gravis
hiemsque gelido frigida spatio refert
uno impetu transiliet, et verni petet
frangetque Tauri colla.

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 944-952.

The fierce nature of anger, the readiness to attack, and the vigilance are manifest on the lion's face and posture. It is significant that Hercules imagines he sees the star or Lion in anger, while Amphitryon detects the madness on the face of the hero:

Quod subitum hoc malum est?
quo, nate, vultus huc et huc acres refers
acieque falsum turbida caelum vides?

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 953-954.

Seneca conveys both the pictures of anger and insanity through the physiological observations. The signs of anger are depicted on the lion's physique. It is remarkable that the picture of anger manifested in the vigilant and wild Lion occurs inside Hercules's mind as an illusion, a figment of his imagination, produced by his thoughts, and indeed, the picture of madness is illustrated on the real face of the hero as well. Therefore, the inner psychological passion is expressed on the facial matter. One could say that the thoughts of anger that were, now, on an extreme level, produced and evoked insanity, which brought concrete and apparent results on the outer environment (starting with being visible on the face and then on the irrational action of murdering one's family). Later, Amphitryon exclaims that Hercules's 'heroic mind has fallen sick' (*pectoris sani parum, Hercules Furens* 974). It is the mind that is sick and transforms the visible parts of the individual, in this case the face. A few lines later, the Fury, which manipulates fire against the hero, attacks Hercules, who first sees her and then his attention drifts to illusions of anger imagining he sees his enemies' children, which are, in reality, his. He also focuses, now, on his desire to kill them, to take revenge, while we see his father announcing his *furor (Hercules Furens* 982-991).

[566] Wilson 2010, p. 236, note on line 945.

Anger and insanity intertwine; the one causes the other, and their delirious dance leads to the fatal and irrational action of murder.

The crime begins; Seneca skilfully describes the arrows piercing his child, the gore bursting of brains spattered all over the roof, the club against his wife and her head's severance from her body and its annihilation (*Hercules Furens* 994-1026). This is what anger can commit. The outcome of the Anger depicted on the 'fiery face' of the hero is also visible on the face of the terrified child in the form of fright, which brings its unavoidable death:

Pavefactus infans igneo vultu patris
perit ante vulnus, spiritum eripuit timor.

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 1022-1023.

The emotional fatal response of the child makes it obvious to the audience how they should receive Heracles's appearance and anger, which is shocked and in fear. His insanity is not something to be admired but to be afraid of and avoid. Otherwise, there might be irreversible results; the child died because of the result his father's anger and madness had on him. Thus, the physical manifestation the passions in Seneca's dramas evokes an emotional response to the other tragic characters which function as a compass to how one should perceive the passion of *ira*. Seneca wants to warn against anger; to show his audience that uncontrolled anger brings the agent to insanity and therefore scare them away from indulging in this emotional state and being irritable. The apotreptic function of the play adds a moral dimension to the plays.

Seneca gives a model of the physiognomic traits of anger and the emotional response it causes as a moral guide, much earlier in the play in lines 720-727. Theseus describes the gate to the kingdom of the dead, focusing on the seat and the expression of its Master, Dis:

Campus hanc circa iacet,
in quo superbo digerit vultu sedens
animas recentes. dira maiestas deo,
frons torva, fratrum quae tamen specimen gerat
gentisque tantae; vultus est illi Iovis,
sed fulminantis. magna pars regni trucis
est ipse dominus, cuius aspectus timet
quidquid timetur.[567]

Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, 720-727.

[567] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 160.

It seems that the importance of the face was great, as it is shown in lines 725-727. Dis's face reveals his power, his strength, and the terror of which he is able. It can induce fear in whoever looks at it. Hence, once more, we can see that the disposition of the mind can be mirrored on the face and should be feared, and also, that an image has great power and impact on the viewer. This image works well as a model of the following physiological signs of anger on Heracles's face, which provoke fear. Again, the play itself provides the audience with physiological manifestations of passions and a moral guide to approach them and examine them.

Some further minor physiognomic depictions of anger on the face are also evident in the play. The face of anger and evil is apparent in Lycus's appearance, whose disposition and mood Megara immediately recognises from his expression:

> *Sed ecce saevus ac minas vultu gerens*
> *et qualis animo est talis incessu venit*
> *aliena dextra sceptra concutiens Lycus.*
>
> Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 329-331.

Megara draws the attention of the audience to Lycus's face, which makes his intentions and his angry mood obvious. His threatening look (*minas*) creates an atmosphere of fear and danger.

Worthy to draw our attention would be the descriptions of invincible and terrifying monsters (*monstra*), which, however, are defeated by Hercules, who provokes panic and trembling in them; *tum victa trepidant monstra, Centauri truces / [Lapithaeque multo in bella succensi mero] / Stygiae paludis ultimos quaerens sinus / fecunda mergit capita Lernaeus labor.* ('Then the monsters he had conquered panicked, savage Centaurs... seeking the farthest recesses of the Stygian swamp, the Lernaean labor submerged its prolific heads.' *Hercules Furens* 778-781).[568] Hercules's rage is a greater menace than monsters are; his own monstrosity makes the monsters shiver and tremble. The physiognomic description of the Hell-Hound that guards the soul covered in snakes is one example of a monster defeated. The phrase *par ira formae* (*Hercules Furens* 788) is of great importance since it enhances the physiognomic concept that the mental state of rage is reflected on the face and reminds one of the description of the angry man who is similar to a wild beast in Seneca's *De Ira (De Ira* 3.4.1-5):

> *Hic saevus umbras territat Stygius canis,*
> *qui trina vasto capita concutiens sono*
> *regnum tuetur. sordidum tabo caput*
> *lambunt colubrae, viperis horrent iubae*
> *longusque torta sibilat cauda draco.*
> *par ira formae: sensit ut motus pedum,*

[568] According to Fitch 2002 translation, line 779 is interpolated, see Fitch 2002, p. 79 n. 40.

attollit hirtas angue vibrato comas
missumque captat aure subrecta sonum,
sentire et umbras solitus.[569]

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 783-791.

However, when Heracles entered, the hound withdrew a bit back and felt uncertainty and fear: *ut propior stetit / Iove natus antro, sedit incertus canis / et uterque timuit* (*Hercules Furens* 791-793). The appearance of rage on the face of the hound shows its cruelty and fierce nature, but in the end, Hercules defeats it. Human rage and power are far worse and greater than those of animals because they encompass moral vices due to human rationality. Therefore, the rage of the hound and Hercules are not on the same level in Seneca's Stoic scheme, exactly because of the absence of rationality in the former. Hercules's rage surpasses the rage of animals and monsters and is much more destructive. Indeed, the angry mood of Cerberus changed after Hercules' attack, and we can see the physiognomic transformation of the angry hound to a frightened and tamed creature which, as said below, 'forgot himself':

Oblitus sui
custos opaci pervigil regni canis
componit aures timidus et patiens trahi,
erumque fassus, ore summisso obsequens,
utrumque cauda pulsat anguifera latus.[570]

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 808-812.

Therefore, here the impact the hero's rage and image has on another being is evident in the physiognomical description of Cerberus, which, no matter how strong and terrifying, the destructive power of Hercules' anger can be read in its posture and movement.

Thyestes

Thyestes is perhaps one of the most horrific tragedies since it shows the complete perversion of the human mind, where not only does Atreus commit a terrible crime, but also draws immense pleasure and joy from it, which is the trait of a perverse nature. In lines 250-253, Seneca, through Atreus, compares the latter's anger to the Furies, presenting them as violent creatures holding fire:

Dira Furiarum cohors
discorsque Erinys veniat et geminas faces

[569] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, pp. 161-162.
[570] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 162.

Megaera quatiens: non satis magno meum
ardet furore pectus, impleri iuvat
maiore monstro.[571]

Seneca, *Thyestes* 250-253.

Here, the impersonation of *ira* and *furor* as Furiae is again incorporated in Seneca's play; it seems it has become a consistent pattern throughout his dramaturgy. Here, the destructive nature of passion, which never ceases or is satisfied, is shown in Atreus's words, *impleri iuvat / maiore monstro* (*Thyestes* 252-253). His unquenched desire for greater horror cannot be satisfied and invited the rage – Furiae- and indulges in the passion; not only has he given his assent to his *ira* but he also shows his fully corrupted soul by asking for greater horror as is typical of the passion of *ira* in Seneca's *De Ira*:

Etiam si resistere contra affectus suos non licet, at certe affectibus ipsis licet stare; haec non secus quam fulmina procellaeque et si qua alia irrevocabilia sunt, quia non eunt, sed cadunt, vim suam magis ac magis intendit.

Seneca, *De Ira* 3.1.4-5.

The passion of anger is never satisfied and never stops. Therefore, Seneca's tragic characters show through themselves that *ira* 'abduces the mind.' *De Ira* 3.1.4). The choice of the word *monstro*, in the verses above, shows again that Atreus has transformed into a monster himself, meaning his fully drowned in his rage and insanity.

Again, Seneca shows that anger and insanity in the form of actualisation of *scelera* and evil plans are bound to cause fear. Atreus, after contemplating a bit, concludes that his children should not be aware of his scheme since they might betray it by the emotion of fear drawn on their face: *multa sed trepidus solet / detegere vultus, magna nolentem quoque / consilia produnt* ('But a fearful face often reveals the truth; large plots betray people against their will.' *Thyestes* 330-332).[572] Hence, again here, the concept of the true mental state depicted on the face, despite the intention of the agent to hide it, is apparent. Our physiognomic construction reveals and gives hints of our inner disposition, even though we might hide it with the aid of conceit. Thus, the physiognomic theory has a truthful basis, and it helps the audience to draw valid information from appearances. Furthermore, the thought that Atreus's children might betray his schemes because of their frightful faces means that the reaction to such *furor* is supposed to be fear and shock. Therefore, indirectly, the audience is again guided on how to respond and react to the *furor* and the passions.

Thyestes is a figure whose appearance shows almost constantly the effect of *ira* and *furor* as he more than often conveys worry and fear. When he tries to decide whether to accept or reject his brother's invitation, Thyestes is worried, which can be shown from his movement and his glance as both he and his son observe:

[571] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 188.
[572] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 190.

[Thyestes] *nunc contra in metus*
revolvor: animus haeret ac retro cupit
corpus referre, moveo nolentem gradum.
[Tantalus Junior] *Pigro (quid hoc est?) genitor incessu stupet*
vultumque versat seque in incerto tenet.[573]

Seneca, *Thyestes* 418-422.

Thyestes's son also confirms the fear and worry on his father's appearance. Furthermore, Thyestes' uncertainty and fear evident on his body are also revealed in lines 436-437: *placet ire, pigris membra sed genibus labant, / alioque quam quo nitor abductus feror.* ('I want to go, but my knees feel wobbly and weak, I get carried somewhere different from where I meant.' *Thyestes* 436-437).[574] Again, the outcome of *furor,* even when it is not apparent and is masked as kindness (as in Atreus's case) unavoidably causes fear and worry. The audience is exhorted to perceive madness, anger and thirst for revenge as a threatening and frightful experience by the appearance of Thyestes and its confirmation by himself or his son. The deteriorating power of passion and insanity garbles Thyestes's peace of mind and passes him a portion of monstrosity in the sense that his brother's *ira* damages him.

Furthermore, when the messenger tries to deliver the horrible story of the two brothers, he notices some bodily disturbances due to the fear and the shock he experienced because of the murderous crime caused by anger: *Si steterit animus, si metu corpus rigens / remittet artus. haeret in vultu trucis / imago facti.* ('If my heart stops fluttering, if my body, stiff with fear, can let my limbs be free. The vision of that crime will not go from my eyes.' *Thyestes* 634-636).[575] The messenger has a role to guide the audience on how to perceive the crime as he who conveys the news, comment it as well; he shows that he conveys news that causes fear and terror, which obviously he would rather avoid narrating, scaring the audience away from the consequences of the passions.

A characteristic feature of anger is the impatience and eagerness for the evil deeds to be realised, the lack of control. Similarly to the Hell Hound's comparison to the physiognomic appearance of anger in *Hercules Furens*, Atreus shows anger's mentioned feature very astutely, borrowing this physiognomical method since he compares himself to an Umbrian hound eager to attack his prey:

vix tempero animo, vix dolor frenos capit.
sic, cum feras vestigat et longo sagax
loro tenetur Umber ac presso vias
scrutatur ore, dum procul lento suem
odore sentit, paret et tacito locum

[573] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 192.
[574] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 193.
[575] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 199.

rostro pererrat; praeda cum propior fuit,
cervice tota pugnat et gemitu vocat
dominum morantem seque retinenti eripit.
cum sperat ira sanguinem, nescit tegi—
tamen tegatur.[576]

Seneca, *Thyestes*, 496-505.

Anger cannot be hidden even if the agent tries to do so. However, in the case of Atreus, it seems he was able to hide his evil disposition well enough so that he commits his crime since he is as powerful as a Stoic sage who has control of himself; Atreus is in control of himself, which, however, is manipulated and infiltrated by his insanity. The hound here impersonates Atreus's anger through an animal simile, showing it cannot hold itself; it needs blood and action. However, Atreus is more powerful than a hound since he possesses rationality; therefore, he can tame his passion, but is nevertheless under its influence. Given the physiognomic content of Seneca's tragedies, the simile to the hound can be read as relating to the zoological method described in the physiognomic literature. According to this method, there's a comparison of human mental state to an animal's characteristics and behaviour. Therefore, the fierce, cruel and savage unquenched behaviour of an animal which wants to eat or is threatened and ready to attack is compared to the behaviour of an angry man who wants revenge and is about to commit heinous deeds. Another simile is Atreus's comparison to a hungry tigress from Ganges when he is about to decide which boy he is to kill first – his *saevum scelus* (*Thyestes* 714) - obviously enjoying the process with brutality:

Ieiuna silvis qualis in Gangeticis
inter iuvencos tigris erravit duos,
utriusque praedae cupida, quo primum ferat
incerta morsus; flectit hoc rictus suos,
illo reflectit et famem dubiam tenet:
sic dirus Atreus capita devota impiae
speculatur irae. quem prius mactet sibi
dubitat, secunda deinde quem caede immolet.
nec interest, sed dubitat et saevum scelus
iuvat ordinare.[577]

Seneca, *Thyestes* 707-715.

Seneca draws another zoological parallel between Atreus and an Armenian long-maned lion to illustrate the savage nature of *furor* and *ira* the moment before the attack or otherwise the realisation of the crime (*scelus*): *Silva iubatus*

[576] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 195.
[577] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, pp. 200-201.

qualis Armenia leo / in caede multa victor armento incubat; / cruore rictus madidus et pulsa fame / non ponit iras: hinc et hinc tauros premens / vitulis minatur, dente iam lasso piger. ('Just as the long-maned lion in Armenia lies on his heap of victims after slaughter, his jaws dripping with blood, his hunger assuaged, he does not set aside his anger, everywhere he still pursues the cattle, snarling with tired teeth.' *Thyestes* 732-736).[578] Atreus is presented as horrid and brutal the moment of his terrible action: *non aliter Atreus saevit atque ira tumet. / ferrumque gemina caede perfusum tenens, / oblitus in quem fureret, infesta manu / exegit ultra corpus; ac pueri statim / pectore receptus ensis e tergo exstitit.* ('So Atreus rages and swells with his rage, holding out the sword drenched in the two boys' blood, careless where his fury leads him, cruelly, he drives the blade in the chest of the child, right through, and all at once it pokes out from his back.' *Thyestes*, 737-741).[579] Atreus, who suppresses his *furor* all along by dint of the upcoming success of his plans, at last reveals his true self; he is mad and cruel, blinded by his anger and insanity, his own *Furia* (*oblitus in quem fureret, Thyestes* 739). He is more brutal than the animals and beasts; he is more destructive and fiercer due to his moral degradation. He is completely corrupted, and his irreversible deed confirms his perversity.

At the end of the play, when all the gods have left appalled by Atreus's crime, Atreus, under the influence of a mixture of anger and malevolent joy, estimates the pleasure he takes from the suffering and fear depicted on his anticipation of Thyestes's 'altered' face:

> *libet videre, capita natorum intuens*
> *quos det colores, verba quae primus dolor*
> *effundat aut ut spiritu expulso stupens*
> *corpus rigescat. fructus hic operis mei est.*
> *miserum videre nolo, sed dum fit miser.*[580]
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 903-907.

Thyestes is Atreus's inner audience within the play, who shows on his face the result of his brother's *scelus* and *ira*; he is in pain, in shock and amazement, trying to comprehend what happened. Again, even more explicitly here, Thyestes guides the audience to an emotional reaction to Atreus's horror; fear, shock and awe. The audience is called to examine what happened; Atreus won, and he is powerful; however, he is mad, and hence, fear is what he has provoked in them, and the gods have abandoned him. The course of events seems favourable to Atreus only in appearance; he is a sinister and perverse man who scatters only destruction and fear due to his anger. The audience needs to examine what happened and what went wrong; the cause of the two brothers' ending and suffering. It could be the family curse- but even Tantalus was terrified in front of the Fury's plans. The impersonation of *ira* as a Furia at the start of the play and the leave of the gods incite the audience to reject the

[578] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 201.
[579] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 201.
[580] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 206.

divine punishment as the cause of the brother's crimes and attribute their suffering to their own *ira*, *furor* and actions. Therefore, Seneca makes it obvious that the human agent is responsible for his own actions.

The above analysis of the Stoic use of physiognomical theories in alignment with Stoic physics in Seneca's tragedies was fortified by examples drawn from the plays themselves. It would be unlikely and unfortunate that these instances of physical manifestations of emotional states in the plays were simply a coincidence. On the contrary, the examples in the plays follow Seneca's theories on the passions as movements and physical events in his *Epistles ad Lucilium*, and his view of anger, which is physically described and compared to fierce animals in his *De Ira,* agreeably to a physiognomical practice. Therefore, the physiognomical approach of passions in Seneca's tragedies is in line with his philosophical endeavours in his prose, and, even more, it seems to have an educational purpose, according to which the audience is warned against the passions and needs to pay attention to the responsibility the human agent has. Therefore, they are called to examine the tragic characters' deeds and, by extension, their own, and be, hopefully, a bit more cautious of passions.

Chapter 4 – The Defeat of Reason in Seneca - Ingrained *Furor* and *Insania*

Introduction

The current chapter explores the concept of madness[581] and ingrained *furor*, the complete loss of rationality in Stoic terms, especially in Seneca. The focus will mainly be on the emotional causality of *feritas* (brutishness) in conjunction with the agent's moral responsibility. The illustration of the way vice and passions defeat reason is crucial to the above process, as it will show that there is a process that transfers the agent from *ira* to *furor* and finally to *feritas*. The characters develop their madness internally, fitting Seneca's concept of incurable character traits acquired through repeated exposure. For the purposes of the current project, it is essential to distinguish the terms *furor, insania, feritas,* and *crudelitas* in Seneca, which presents difficulties due to the interchangeable use of the terms. An analysis of Seneca's tragic characters will follow to show that their ingrained mental traits are related to their *furor* or even their hallucinatory insanity. Therefore, they are responsible for both their mental state and irrational actions, manifesting the former. Additionally, the question of the nature of the self and the development and establishment of traits of character will also be a key point of discussion since a repeated affective experience can lead to the alteration of the mind, resulting in a destructive personality if reason does not intervene in time, and thus to the dissolution and collapse of the self.

This chapter points to the thesis's broader aim, which is to show Seneca's attempts to warn his readers away from anger through his tragic *exempla*. Madness caused by strong emotions was a persistent theme in Roman tragedy, and Seneca also used it in his tragedies in service of his philosophical purposes, meaning to scare the audience away from indulging their passions. Therefore, the analysis of *furor* and its origin in Stoic emotions will be valuable to the broader aim of the thesis, which is the advocacy of the therapeutic and educative Senecan tragedy, which functions as a secondary tool to prevent the triumph of the passions in the human soul. The above will be achieved through psychological portraiture and analysis of various tragic characters (such as Medea, Heracles, Atreus, and Clytemnestra) vis-a-vis Seneca's *De Ira,* among other philosophical prose (e.g. *Epistles* and *De Beneficiis*), which will serve to clarify the cognitive procedure which causes the affective reactions and brings the characters to the defeat of reason.

The investigation of the emotional causality of madness in Seneca will shed light on the reasons Seneca's tragic characters behave irrationally. Bán highlights the similarities and the differences of Medea's madness with the medical insanity, since both present symptoms and therapeutic tools as connection points (cognitive confusion, and dialogue or self-control), and she points to a philosophical understanding of madness.[582] Bán also analyses pictorial metaphors and representations of sea storm, fire and snakes in *Medea* to understand Medea's unchecked anger better, since if characters don't follow virtue and Nature, the balance

[581] For a general overview of madness in the Greco-Roman world, see Bosman 2009.
[582] Bán 2019, pp. 5–16. See also a similar study on Seneca's Phaedra in Bán 2021, pp. 105–118.

of their souls is shaken, and passions disrupt their rational mechanisms and decision-making process.[583] Also, Ahonen distinguishes medical madness as bodily disease from madness stemming from a soul afflicted by false opinions and passions, explaining Seneca's view that madness is a psychic state in need of a philosophical cure rather than a physical cure (*Epistles* 94.17).[584] As in the current thesis, Eliopoulos and Bán show that passions are presented in Seneca's tragedy in accordance with Stoic tradition,[585] and that one needs to be careful of the 'first blows' of passion before they form into madness (*De Providentia* 4.10).[586] Folly's first signs are not visible: *Mutationis periculum effugit; stultitia ad sapientiam erepit, sapientia in stultitiam non revolvitur.* ('It has escaped all risk of change; folly may creep upwards towards wisdom, but wisdom never slips back into folly.' *Epistles* 76.20). Fortunately, philosophical advice also gradually creeps into one's soul: *Plurimum proficit sermo, quia minutatim inrepit animo.* ('But the greatest benefit is to be derived from conversation, because it creeps by degrees into the soul.' *Epistles* 38.1.2-6).

Madness- the Stoic terminology

There is an utter need to distinguish philosophical madness from commonly known medical insanity, since these are important terms used throughout the current chapter. Stoics maintained that *πᾶς ἄφρων μαίνεται; Omnem stultum insanire* ('Every fool is insane.' Cicero, *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 4).[587] A fool is anyone who is not a Stoic sage, hence the majority of people, since rarely can one attain and fully comprehend the knowledge necessary to reach virtue and wisdom. They held, then, that these fools were mad. The terms *ἄφρων* or *insanire* do not imply insanity as a mental disease but rather the common human tendency to form passions due to attributing wrong value to external objects.[588] Passions involve the element of irrationality because of their impulsivity and tendency to overcome reason. In Stoicism, then, there are two types of insanity: one which stems from physiological and bodily malfunctions and injuries and renders a person deranged or hallucinating and another type which is common in the sense that a person indulges in an erroneous judgment and gives in to their emotion. The latter is a Stoic moral concept which betrays a 'flawed rationality' whereas the former is a notion in the sense of mental illness, which makes the individual 'morally subhuman'[589] lacking both rationality and responsibility for their actions; *πάντας τε τοὺς ἄφρονας μαίνεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ φρονίμους εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ἴσην τῇ ἀφροσύνῃ μανίαν πάντα πράττειν* ('another of their tenets is that the unwise are all mad, in as much as they are not wise but do what they do from that madness which is the equivalent of their senselessness.' D.L. 7.124).[590] Foolish people who cannot recognise what is truly good and bad for them or discern virtue from vice

[583] Bán 2020, pp. 5–15.
[584] Ahonen 2018, pp. 3–18, esp. pp. 7-8.
[585] Eliopoulos 2016, pp. 94–117; Bán 2021, p. 117.
[586] Bán 2021, p. 117.
[587] Webb 1985, p. 25; or 'that every foolish man is mad' according to Loeb's translation. (on the every man is mad: *SVF* 3.657–70).
[588] Graver 2007, p. 111.
[589] Graver 2007, pp. 111-112.
[590] I prefer Graver's translation of the word ἀφροσύνῃ as 'senselessness'.

exhibit mental and moral blindness (*τυφλότης*). Seneca astutely compares the blindness of the eye to the mind's blindness due to passions in his *Epistles*. His wife's clown, Harpasté, ignores her disease and keeps asking to change quarters because everything seems dark (Seneca, *Epistles* 50.2). Seneca compares the clown's physical blindness to being ruled by passions, as the latter is also a disease:

> *Hoc quod in illa ridemus, omnibus nobis accidere liqueat tibi; nemo se avarum esse intellegit, nemo cupidum. Caeci tamen ducem quaerunt, nos sine duce erramus.*
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> Seneca, *Epistles* 50.3.

Seneca compares the passion of greed to a disease such as blindness. Furthermore, similarly to the blind man, the man suffering from passions wanders without a guide or ethical principle, suffering from moral blindness in truth, blaming the fault on everyone else, except for oneself (*Epistles* 50.3). Indeed, we deceive ourselves and ignore our personal responsibility:

> *Quid nos decipimus? Non est extrinsecus malum nostrum; intra nos est, in visceribus ipsis sedet, et ideo difficulter ad sanitatem pervenimus, quia nos aegrotare nescimus.*
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> Seneca, *Epistles* 50.4.

As the blind clown deceived herself, we also deceive ourselves when we blame external factors for our internal diseases and misconceptions. The frequent experience of the common state of madness, which is passion, might lead to insanity in the form of a mental disease (*Epistles* 75.11-14).

Passions, as shown in the first chapter, are also impulses. Their fierce nature often makes them resemble a kind of short-lived madness. Of all passions, anger is the one that resembles and is more likely to turn into madness. Galen saved Chrysippus' view by mixing snippets of text (*SVF* 3.478, 4.6.44-46) where he compares the insane persons' characteristics to those of an angry man, like excessive movements (*κινεῖσθαι μανιωδῶς*, 'moving about like a madman'),[591] and weakness to grasp the identity of reality (like the key of a closed door), a failure to recognise the obvious things around us (*ἐκφανῆ, PHP* 3.1.15; *SVF* 2.885).[592] Anger is something blind that causes the individual to follow in the opposite direction to the reason imposed (Chrysippus, *On Disharmony;* Plutarch, *Sym.* 187b).[593] Even if the agents function according to rational precepts, the latter malfunction. Hence, they turn their back on logic and are being subjected to a more powerful motion because anger is blind and obscures the obvious (*τυφλόν ἐστιν ἡ ὀργὴ,* Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 450C, *SVF* 3.390). Hence, anger brings some sort of mental clouding which does not permit the individual the 'occurrence of

[591] Tieleman 2003, pp. 178-179.
[592] Tieleman 1996, p. 143; 2003, p. 179. The most characteristic Stoic example of anger and its fierce nature would be Seneca's *De Ira* (1.1). For blindness in anger in Epicurean Philodemus' *De Ira*, see Armstrong & McOsker 2020.
[593] See Long 1991, p. 97 on cosmic reason and harmony. Also, *SVF* 1.179 ff, cf. 3.2 ff.

cognition'[594] (*κατάληψις*). Seneca also calls the passion of anger *brevis insania* (*De Ira* 1.1), meaning 'temporary insanity', not to distinguish madness from clinical insanity, but to show the fierce nature of *ira,* which can lead to irrational mental states at a later stage: *Quantum est effugere maximum malum, iram, et cum illa rabiem, saevitiam, crudelitatem, furorem, alios comites eius adfectus!* ('How great a blessing to escape anger, the greatest of all ills, and along with it madness, ferocity, cruelty, rage, and the other passions that attend anger!' *De Ira* 2.12.6). Therefore, although different factors cause the two kinds of madness, the one by physical and bodily malfunctions and diseases, whereas the latter by malfunctions of the reason, they both exhibit similar symptoms and manifestations[595] such as hallucinations, internal conflicts, fierce and vehement movements, irrationality and rush to irrational and destructive actions. However, Seneca distinguishes between different types of madness and maintains that they should not always be treated with the same means: *A consuetudine quaedam, quae dicimus, abhorrent, deinde alia via ad consuetudinem redeunt…insanire omnes dicimus, nec omnes curamus elleboro; his ipsis, quos vocamus insanos, et suffragium et iuris dictionem committimus.* ('Some of the utterances that we Stoics make avoid the ordinary meaning of the terms, and then by a different line of thought are restored to their ordinary meaning…we declare that all men are mad, and yet we do not dose all men with hellebore; and to the very men whom we call mad we entrust the right of suffrage and the jurisdiction of a judge.' *De Beneficiis* 2.35.2-3).[596] Seneca confirms that the Stoics habitually used common terminology and gave it a different meaning. He specifically mentions the term *insanire (De Beneficiis,* 2.35.2-3); they do not treat all the madmen with hellebore, which would treat the physical cause of madness, black bile, for instance. Therefore, if there can be different kinds of cures and treatments, then different causes, meaning physiological and cognitive factors, might similarly bring madness. In addition, Seneca's confirmation and agreement with the mainstream Stoic view on madness align with his opinion of anger as brief insanity. Anger is caused by false beliefs, and provokes *brevis insania,* of which the frequent exercise might lead to insanity. *Brevis insania* can be cured by correcting the agent's false beliefs and opinions before it is too late and turns into an irreversible state of mind, a *monstrum*.

Graver maintains that one cannot exhibit both types of insanity simultaneously,[597] although Tieleman[598] fails to see the distinction between the two types of insanity. Graver argues that the common madness of the fool requires a level of functioning rationality by something monstrous in nature. Although her premise is true, there is not really a matter of simultaneous experience of the two kinds of madness, but rather a transition from

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[594] Tieleman 2003, p. 181.
[595] On the resemblance of madness's psychic and physical origins, see Bán 2019, pp. 6-8.
[596] Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 2.35.2-3: *A consuetudine quaedam, quae dicimus, abhorrent, deinde alia via ad consuetudinem redeunt. Negamus iniuriam accipere sapientem, tamen, qui illum pugno percusserit, iniuriarum damnabitur; negamus stulti quidquam esse, et tamen eum, qui rem aliquam stulto surripuit, furti condemnabimus; insanire omnes dicimus, nec omnes curamus elleboro; his ipsis, quos vocamus insanos, et suffragium et iuris dictionem committimus.*('Some of the utterances that we Stoics make avoid the ordinary meaning of the terms, and then by a different line of thought are restored to their ordinary meaning. We deny that the wise man can receive injury, yet the man who strikes him with his fist will be sentenced on the charge of doing him an injury; we deny that a fool possesses anything, and yet a man who steals some object from a fool will be punished for theft; we declare that all men are mad, and yet we do not dose all men with hellebore; and to the very men whom we call mad we entrust the right of suffrage and the jurisdiction of a judge'.).
[597] Graver 2007, p. 112.
[598] Tieleman 2003, pp. 178-190.

a passionate state of *ira* to the irrational state of madness and *furor* (*Epistles* 75.11-14) which, at that stage, can no longer be distinguished by insanity in clinical terms as the symptoms are similar. Therefore, there are different causes of madness, but they manifest in almost an identical manner.

A deeper exploration of the differences between the two kinds of insanity and the causality between them is necessary to discern their appearance in Seneca's body of dramas; the causal link between them is illustrated in the plays consisting of a vivid way to the revelation and the danger of anger (*brevis insania*), which can lead to the severe and irreversible state of insanity (*feritas*, *furor, insania*).[599] Thus, to understand the tragic characters' psyche better, it is crucial to first explore the emotional causality of madness in Seneca.

There was a certain condition widely called μελαγχολία (melancholy), often associated with a change in diet or the effect of a drug (such as white hellebore), an imbalance of humours like μέλας χόλος (black bile), the term μανία (insanity), and actions of brutishness and disease as mental illness, attributed to persons called θηριώδεις, meaning brutish or beastlike (Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* 10; Pseudo- Aristotelian *Problems* 30.1).[600] The behaviour associated with melancholia was not considered voluntary, and therefore, the diseased individual did not have responsibility for their actions as they lacked a sense of reason.[601]

Chrysippus thought that even hallucinatory insanity stemmed from passions. Aetius describes how Chrysippus distinguishes four Greek terms pertaining to rational faculties with common root φανταση-, and discerns the notions of impression, impressor, imagination and figment.[602] Hallucinations, products of one's φαντασία, reveal their cause: εἴρηται δ᾽ ἡ φαντασία ἀπὸ τοῦ "φωτός·" καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ φῶς αὐτὸ δείκνυσι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ περιεχόμενα, καὶ ἡ φαντασία δείκνυσιν ἑαυτὴν καὶ τὸ πεποιηκὸς αὐτήν. ('The word impression (pha-ntasia) derives from "light" (pha-os/phôs);[603] just as light reveals itself and all the other things that are embraced in it, so too the impression reveals itself and what produced it.' Aetius, *Placita* 4.12 (LS 39B); D.L. 7.51). Φαντασία reveals its cause; therefore, one might not have actually and consciously seen or thought of the prepositional content of the passions, which explains its cause, but the latter is nevertheless evident in the impression which starts a passion. In a similar manner, the hallucinations in the last stage of the scale from *ira* to *furor* and *insania*, shows both the mental state of the agent and its cause.

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[599] The terms *feritas, crudelitas, furor,* and *insania* are often used by Seneca interchangeably. Furthermore, *furor* is a staple of tragedy, and Seneca might be using it in this specific literary register. However, the next sections will show that there are certain minor differences between them. In a nutshell, *feritas* and *crudelitas* are subcategories of *furor,* which is frenzied rage and madness stemming from anger (*ira*), whereas *insania* is insanity as commonly known; the utter loss of one's rational faculty.

[600] See more in Padel 1995, pp. 47–64; Paschall 1939; Müri 1953 and for the medical texts see Flashar 1966. See also Pigeaud 1981.

[601] In *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.7 and 7.10, there is another interpretation of μελαγχολία treated by Aristotle as incontinence rather than complete remission of responsibility for one's actions due to lack of reason.

[602] Aetius, *Placita* 4.12 (LS 39B); D.L. 7.51: Χρύσιππος διαφέρειν ἀλλήλων φησὶ τέτταρα ταῦτα. φαντασία μὲν οὖν ἐστι πάθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γινόμενον, ἐνδεικνύμενον ἐν αὑτῷ καὶ τὸ πεποιηκός· οἷον ἐπειδὰν δι᾽ ὄψεως θεωρῶμέν τι λευκόν, ἔστι πάθος τὸ ἐγγεγενημένον διὰ τῆς ὁράσεως ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ· καὶ <κατὰ> τοῦτο τὸ πάθος εἰπεῖν ἔχομεν, ὅτι ὑπόκειται λευκὸν κινοῦν ἡμᾶς· ὁμοίως καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁφῆς καὶ τῆς ὀσφρήσεως. ('Chrysippus says that these four are different from one another. An impression (*φαντασία*) is an affection coming about in the soul, which within itself reveals also what produced it (i.e., its cause). As when through sight we observe something white, the affection is what has come about in the soul through seeing; and it is <on account of> this affection that we are able to say that there is a white object that affects us. And similarly, when we are affected through touch and smell.').

[603] Mansfeld & Runia 2023 comment that the etymology is already presented in Aristotle, *de An.* 3.3 429a3 (p. 363, fn 22).

Chrysippus is going on saying that for an impression (φαντασία) there needs to be a stimulus, the impressor (φανταστόν): φανταστὸν δὲ τὸ ποιοῦν τὴν φαντασίαν· οἷον τὸ λευκὸν καὶ τὸ ψυχρὸν | καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι ἂν δύνηται κινεῖν τὴν ψυχήν, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι φανταστόν. (An impressor (φανταστὸν) is what produces the impression, like the white or the cold or whatever is capable of affecting the soul, this is an impressor. Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12). Therefore, for a πάθος to form, a stimulus is necessary and is also revealed in the impression. Chrysippus also contemplates a very similar mental procedure occurring in the mind of a mad person, revealed by the analysis of the relevant terminology explaining that imagination (φανταστικόν) has no impressor (φανταστόν) in contrast to impression (φαντασία).[604] Therefore, a figment of imagination (φάντασμα) is the object of the hallucinatory madness: φάντασμα δ᾽ ἐστίν, ἐφ᾽ ὃ ἑλκόμεθα κατὰ τὸν φανταστικὸν διάκενον ἕλκυσμόν· ταῦτα δὲ γίνεται ἐπὶ τῶν μελαγχολώντων καὶ μεμηνότων, (‘A figment (phantasma) is that to which we are attracted in an empty reflex of the imagination; it occurs in people who are melancholic and mad.’ Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12). Chrysippus employs an example from tragedy to enhance his cognitive theory of madness: ὁ γοῦν τραγικὸς Ὀρέστης ὅταν λέγῃ (‘When the tragic hero Orestes says’ Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12), citing Euripidean verses (Euripides, *Orestes* 255–259) explaining that Orestes is mad: λέγει μὲν αὐτὰ ὡς μεμηνὼς ὁρᾷ δ᾽ οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μόνον (‘he says this because he is mad, and he sees nothing but only believes that he does.’ Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12).[605]

Φάντασμα is a figment of one’s imagination and is experienced by people in a state of insanity. In the case of Orestes’ melancholic insanity, the Furies are empty attractions and hallucinations; they exist only in Orestes’ mind, and no one else can see them. However, they still influence his actions; the visions indicate an altered state of mind, and the focus lies on a disruption in the capacity for impressions, as Sextus Empiricus’ passage also shows.[606] The latter also exploited the character of Orestes as an example of madness (Sextus, *Against the Professors* 7.243–49/ *SVF* 2.65) when discussing Stoic epistemology:

> ἀληθεῖς δὲ καὶ ψευδεῖς, ὁποία προσέπιπτεν Ὀρέστῃ κατὰ μανίαν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἠλέκτρας (καθὸ μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντός τινος προσέπιπτεν, ἦν ἀληθής, ὑπῆρχε γὰρ Ἠλέκτρα, καθὸ δ᾽ ὡς ἀπὸ Ἐρινύος, ψευδής, οὐκ ἦν γὰρ Ἐρινύς.
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> Sextus, *Against the Professors* 7.244-245.

[604] Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12 Φανταστικὸν δ᾽ ἐστὶ διάκενος ἑλκυσμός, πάθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἀπ᾽ οὐδενὸς φανταστοῦ γινόμενον, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ σκιαμαχοῦντος καὶ κενοῖς ἐπιφέροντος τὰς χεῖρας· τῇ γὰρ φαντασίᾳ ὑπόκειταί τι φανταστόν, τῷ δὲ φανταστικῷ οὐδέν (Imagination (phantastikon) is an empty reflex, an affection in the soul that does not arise from any impressor, as when someone shadowboxes or strikes his hands against thin air; for an impression has some impressor as its object, but the imagination has none.’).

[605] Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12: ὦ μῆτερ, ἱκετεύω σε, μὴ ᾽πίσειέ μοι / τὰς αἱματωποὺς καὶ δρακοντώδεις κόρας· / αὗται γάρ, αὗται πλησίον θρώσκουσί μου. / λέγει μὲν αὐτὰ ὡς μεμηνὼς ὁρᾷ δ᾽ οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μόνον· διὸ καί | φησιν αὐτῷ Ἠλέκτρα· -μέν᾽, ὦ ταλαίπωρ᾽, ἀτρέμα σοῖς ἐν δεμνίοις· / ὁρᾷς γὰρ οὐδὲν ὧν δοκεῖς σάφ᾽ εἰδέναι, / ὡς καὶ παρ᾽ Ὁμήρῳ Θεοκλύμενος. (‘Mother, I beg you, don’t urge upon me those bloody-faced, snake-like maidens! Here they come leaping toward me, he says this because he is mad, and he sees nothing but only believes that he does. That is why Electra also says to him: Poor man, keep still in your bed! You don’t actually see anything you think you see! Just like Theoclymenus in Homer too.’).

[606] Graver 2007, p. 113.

In this case, though, Orestes receives an impression, the nature of which is double; it is both true and false since there is an external stimulus - Electra- but its interpretation is mistaken in that Orestes thinks he sees a Fury instead of Electra. When analysing the causation of the melancholic frenzy, Cicero mentions that the Greek term μελαγχολία is the equivalent of the Latin word *furor*. The difference between the Greek and Latin terms is that the former is often attributed to black bile (μέλας χόλος). However, Cicero believes that *furor* also occurs because of strong emotion, a passion, also employing tragic examples, Orestes included:

> *Graeci volunt illi quidem, sed parum valent verbo: quem nos furorem, μελαγχολίαν illi vocant. Quasi vero atra bili solum mens ac non saepe vel iracundia graviore vel timore vel dolore moveatur, quo genere Athamantem, Alcmaeonem, Aiacem, Orestem furere dicimus.*
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> Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.11.

Underneath the Greek and Latin terms, Cicero makes a distinction between the assumptions underlying them; Maintaining that the mind is influenced by emotions (*iracundia*, *timore*, *dolore, Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.11), he seems to read Orestes' madness in terms of a Stoic assent to the passions, rather than insanity per se in terms of a clinical diagnosis.

Hallucinations are much related to insanity, mainly featuring in tragedies; characteristically, we can think of the Furies (Ἐρινύες) chasing Orestes being visible only to him or Ajax slaughtering the sheep passing them for Greek soldiers. Additionally, the Stoics drew many examples from tragedies (Sext. 7.244-5 (SW2.65); Aetius 4.12.1 (SW2.54)).[607] Here, Stoic and Seneca's affinity to tragic examples (e.g. *Medea* 958-971) of insanity is explained by showing the course from *ira* (anger, a passion which is an example of the common foolishness among people, and also brief insanity (*De Ira* 1.1), to *furor*, the utter loss of one's mind; madness (*Epistles* 75.11-14).

Despite the view that hallucinatory insanity may be caused by medical conditions and changes in humours lacking personal responsibility,[608] the latter is stressed due to the opinion that repeated experience of strong emotions can cause insanity. A causal correlation between the two kinds of madness is evident in Seneca's plays, since tragedies are vehicles to emphasise the connection between the two by conveying the emotional causality of *furor* and the personal responsibility entailed. The tragic characters are already in the third stage of madness, which, however, reveals its cause despite the malfunctioning reasoning behind it. Hallucinations show the values and beliefs of the maddened characters. Seneca describes the stages of madness (*De Ira* 2.4.2) and how the latter stems from one's impulses and passions. Therefore, he argues that madness is the climax of a series of ingrained and learned traits (*Epistles* 75.11-14). Gill also argues that in Seneca's dramatic works, the

[607] See Tieleman 2003, p. 184; Graver 2007, p. 110; Gourinat 1996, pp. 40-42.
[608] Chrysippus recognised some behavioural manifestations of a mental condition, μελαγχολία, which was based on some disruption in the reception and interpretation of impressions, and again rendered the agent free from blame since their deranged state of mind does not allow any rational processing in contrast to human errors which, although unreasonable, depend on rational procedures and cognition (Graver 2007, p. 111; Tieleman 2003, pp. 178-184).

tragic heroes experience inner conflict, they surrender to the emotional forces of their passions, which generate a kind of madness.[609] The significant trait which distinguishes Seneca's drama from Greek tragedy[610] is not that the characters get mad, but that their raving insanity is not god-induced; their madness is rather psychologised and moralised, and they often recognise their culpability as 'madness', but through defective reasoning, they fail to resist their vice.[611] The theory of passions generating madness in Seneca's plays calls for a philosophical and ideological background, which is closely connected to Stoicism.[612]

Emotional Causality of Madness and Personal Responsibility

The nature and process of madness occurring in the human soul are closely intertwined with the passions. As in the first chapter on the Stoic theory of action, a simple πάθος occurs when one gives one's assent to a false judgement and lets oneself be overcome by the emotion. When this process happens frequently, a small percentage of individuals develop the condition of melancholic insanity due to a mental disruption in the formation of impressions. Repeated submission to angry impulses can develop into melancholic insanity. Therefore, madness in the form of utter insanity is different from madness in the form of anger (*brevis insania, De Ira* 1.1) in that it lacks reason or judgment and has an involuntary character. However, the former type of madness is not exempt from individual responsibility since there is an emotional causational link between passions and insanity. One does not choose the latter, but one can choose or reject the judgments behind the passion at an earlier stage. Thus, there is a non-immediate responsibility for insanity through constant indulgence in passions:

> *Quid inter morbos animi intersit et adfectus, saepe iam dixi. Nunc quoque te admonebo: morbi sunt inveterata vitia et dura, ut avaritia, ut ambitio; nimio artius haec animum inplicuerunt et perpetua eius mala esse coeperunt.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 75.11.

Therefore, Seneca explicitly says that disease, as madness, is a chronic evil which becomes permanent because of the frequent persistence of false opinions and believes, meaning the passions:

> *Ut breviter finiam, morbus est iudicium in pravo pertinax, tamquam valde expetenda sint, quae leviter expetenda sunt. Vel si mavis, ita finiamus: nimis inminere leviter petendis vel ex toto non petendis, aut in magno pretio habere in aliquo habenda vel in nullo.*

[609] Gill 1997, p. 213.
[610] Gill 1997, pp. 213; 219-222; See also Riley 2008 on a comparison between Euripedean Herakles and Senecan Hercules.
[611] Gill 1997, p. 214. For the passion as madness being a pervasive theme in Roman poetry, see Fantham 1982, Chapter 10, pp. 19-23, 41-48, 55-56.
[612] Gill 1997, p. 214.

Disease is a chronic perversion of judgment (*morbus est iudicium in pravo pertinax. Epistles* 75.11). Perversed *iudicium* comes from attributing value to *indifferentia*, which have no intrinsic value (*aut in magno pretio habere in aliquo habenda vel in nullo. Epistles* 75.11-12). Therefore, a chronic disease, madness, is a persistent habitual state of passion,[613] which has remained unnoticed and untreated for a long time: *Adfectus sunt motus animi inprobabiles, subiti et concitati, qui frequentes neglectique fecere morbum* (‘“Passions” are objectionable impulses of the spirit, sudden and vehement; they have come so often, and so little attention has been paid to them, that they have caused a state of disease.’ *Epistles* 75.12).[614] Therefore, the emotional causality of madness is confirmed by Seneca.

Attention is needed even if one has not reached the madness stage as they who still feel passions are always susceptible to chronic diseases: *Itaque qui plurimum profecere, extra morbos sunt, adfectus adhuc sentiunt perfecto proximi.* (‘Therefore we may say that those who have made most progress are beyond the reach of the “diseases”; but they still feel the “passions” even when very near perfection’. *Epistles* 75.12). Hence, Seneca categorises people depending on their tendency and frequency to exercise their passions.[615] Seneca emphasises the importance of being mindful of one’s mental health, as one should always be vigilant, not only when passions are at their peak, but also when the first signs of passion are evident, especially anger. Hence, we should not find an excuse to avoid our responsibility, as people, especially in tragedies,[616] do when blaming *Fortuna* and the gods for their misfortunes:

> *Non est quod patrocinium nobis quaeramus et excusatam licentiam, dicentes aut utile id esse aut inevitabile; cui enim tandem vitio advocatus defuit? Non est quod dicas excidi non posse; sanabilibus aegrotamus malis ipsaque nos in rectum genitos natura, si emendari velimus, iuvat.*

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[613] Passion originates from false believes about *indifferentia* as shown in Chapter 1 in the current thesis.

[614] Furthermore, Seneca parallels chronic disease caused by passions with a physical disease, catarrh: *sicut destillatio una nec adhuc in morem adducta tussim facit, adsidua et vetus phthisin* just as a catarrh, when there has been but a single attack and the catarrh has not yet become habitual, produces a cough, but causes consumption when it has become regular and chronic.’ *Epistles* 75.12).

[615] Seneca, *Epistles* 75.13-14*: Secundum genus est eorum, qui et maxima animi mala et adfectus deposuerunt, sed ita, ut non sit illis securitatis suae certa possessio. Possunt enim in eadem relabi. Tertium illud genus extra multa et magna vitia est, sed non extra omnia. Effugit avaritiam, sed iram adhuc sentit; iam non sollicitatur libidine, etiamnunc ambitione; iam non concupiscit, sed adhuc timet. Et in ipso metu ad quaedam satis firmus est, quibusdam cedit. Mortem contemnit, dolorem reformidat*. (‘The second class is composed of those who have laid aside both the greatest ills of the mind and its passions, but yet are not in assured possession of immunity. For they can still slip back into their former state. The third class are beyond the reach of many of the vices and particularly of the great vices, but not beyond the reach of all. They have escaped avarice, for example, but still feel anger; they no longer are troubled by lust, but are still troubled by ambition; they no longer have desire, but they still have fear. And just because they fear, although they are strong enough to withstand certain things, there are certain things to which they yield; they scorn death, but are in terror of pain.’).

[616] The tendency to blame *Fortuna*, as well as the need to be personally responsible for one’s misfortunes and passions expressed by Seneca’s tragic Choruses, is further analysed in Chapter 5 in the current thesis.

Seneca recognises that passions could cause insanity when they are ungoverned: *Inmodica ira gignit insaniam* ('Ungoverned anger begets madness', *Epistles* 18.14, Epicurus, Frag. 484). Seneca comments on the fact that insanity can be provoked by anger, and that the triggering event, an insult, for instance, might not be important, but the kind of soul who receives the insult is what plays a pivotal role in the establishment of madness: *Nec interest, ex quam magna causa nascatur, sed in qualem perveniat animum, (Epistles* 18.15). Madness can happen to anyone (*In omnes personas hic exardescit affectus, Epistles* 18.15), hence the need for attention. Similarly to fire (*Epistles* 18.15),[617] madness can poison the susceptible to anger soul: *Ita est, mi Lucili, ingentis irae exitus furor est, et ideo ira vitanda est non moderationis causa, sed sanitatis.* ('So it is with anger, my dear Lucilius; the outcome of a mighty anger is madness, and hence anger should be avoided, not merely that we may escape excess, but that we may have a healthy mind.' *Epistles* 18.15). Anger, is able to beget madness, and Seneca is concerned about its ability to alter the constitution of the mind (*ingentis irae exitus furor est*, *Epistles* 18.15). Also, if the agent is not in a good and healthy mental state, *ira* and *furor* are to influence them on a much greater scale. The sane mind will probably work similarly to the solid timber (*Epistles* 18.15), whereas the already vicious and unstable mind will develop a more severe and persistent mental scar and deterioration of oneself and personality.

Seneca comments on Aristo's view on treating insanity, who confirms two causes of madness: bodily disease and false opinions: *Inter insaniam publicam et hanc, quae medicis traditur, nihil interest nisi quod haec morbo laborat, illa opinionibus falsis* ('Between the insanity of people in general and the insanity which is subject to medical treatment, there is no difference, except that the latter is suffering from disease and the former from false opinions.' *Epistles* 94.16-17). However, he believes that the same cure is required for both kinds, which is removing the main cause of madness. The physical disease was usually attributed to black bile; therefore, its treatment and removal of any detrimental and damaging substance would serve the first kind of *insania,* whereas the treatment of the diseased mind would suffice to cure the second type of *insania*, which stems from false beliefs and opinions. It would be implied that the cure of the latter type would be the removal of the false opinions from the mind: *Ei bilis nigra curanda est et ipsa furoris causa removenda. Idem in hoc alio animi furore faciendum est. Ipse discuti debet* ('What is really necessary is to treat the black bile and remove the essential cause of the madness. And this is what should also be done in the other case—that of the mind diseased.' *Epistles* 94.16-17). Furthermore, in contrast to Aristo (*Epistles* 94.16-17), Seneca fins advice and precepts an acceptable means to cure madness for those not completely insane:

[617] *Epistles* 18.15: *Sic ignis non refert quam magnus, sed quo incidat. Nam etiam maximum solida non receperunt; rursus arida et corripi facilia scintillam quoque fovent usque in incendium.* ('Similarly with fire; it does not matter how great is the flame, but what it falls upon. For solid timbers have repelled a very great fire; conversely, dry and easily inflammable stuff nourishes the slightest spark into a conflagration.').

"Nemo," inquit, "praeceptis curat insaniam; ergo ne malitiam quidem." Dissimile est. Nam si insaniam sustuleris, sanitas redit, at si falsas opiniones exclusimus, non statim sequitur dispectus rerum agendarum. Ut sequatur, tamen admonitio conroborabit rectam de bonis malisque sententiam. Illud quoque falsum est, nihil apud insanos proficere praecepta. Nam quemadmodum sola non prosunt, sic curationem adiuvant. Et denuntiatio et castigatio insanos coercuit. De illis nunc insanis loquor, quibus mens mota est, non erepta.

Seneca, *Epistle* 94.36.

Not only does Seneca distinguish between the two kinds of insanity, but he also believes that there is hope for those who have been mad because of their passions and have not yet completely lost their power of mind and rational faculties. He argues that precepts, scolding, and chastening can be used as ancillary therapeutic tools to guide the agent towards the right path,[618] as the transition from madness to sanity takes time. These observations are important because they highlight the difference between medical insanity to the insanity caused by passions. Furthermore, if there is a transition from madness to sanity, it is reasonable to infer that there is a reverse transition from madness to sanity which entails a training of the rational faculty with the aid of admonition and precepts, which comes as an answer to Aristo's claim in *Epistle* 17 that madness can be treated and cured only by physical treatment.[619]

Madness in Seneca is a process which develops gradually within the soul, since it is a disease of the mind caused by passions and false beliefs; therefore, it is not seemingly evident since it works silently and underground within one's breast: *Maius malum est hoc, quod non possum tibi ostendere; in pectore ipso collectio et vomica est.* ('But my trouble is greater than any of these, and I cannot show it to you. The abscess, or ulcer, is deep within my breast.' *Epistles* 68.8-9).[620] This ulcer, a hidden cause of misfortune, is one's madness.[621]

Unfortunately, mental disease in the form of *furor* is apparent at a later stage, since it is manifested in one's actions and behaviour when it has already grown. It is not feasible to remove the false opinions which have permeated the human soul permanently, and cure the madness:

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[618] On the educative and therapeutic function of Seneca's plays in preventing madness and the chorus's use of precepts to guide the audience, see Chapter 2 in the current thesis.
[619] Gummere 1917, p. 35, n. a.
[620] Behind one's thorax lies the heart, which is the location of the soul according to Chrysippus. On the location of the soul and its physicality, see the first chapter of the current thesis.
[621] Seneca, *Epistles* 68.8-9: *Quid in otio facio? Ulcus meum curo. Si ostenderem tibi pedem turgidum, lividam manum aut contracti cruris aridos nervos, permitteres mihi uno loco iacere et fovere morbum meum. Maius malum est hoc, quod non possum tibi ostendere; in pectore ipso collectio et vomica est. Nolo nolo laudes, nolo dicas: "o magnum virum! contempsit omnia et damnatis humanae vitae furoribus fugit."* ('What, then, am I myself doing with my leisure? I am trying to cure my own sores. If I were to show you a swollen foot, or an inflamed hand, or some shrivelled sinews in a withered leg, you would permit me to lie quiet in one place and to apply lotions to the diseased member. But my trouble is greater than any of these, and I cannot show it to you. The abscess, or ulcer, is deep within my breast. Pray, pray, do not commend me, do not say: "What a great man! He has learned to despise all things; condemning the madnesses of man's life, he has made his escape!"').

"Nihil," inquit, "efficient monitiones admotae gravibus vitiis." Ne medicina quidem morbos insanabiles vincit, tamen adhibetur aliis in remedium, aliis in levamentum. Ne ipsa quidem universae philosophiae vis, licet totas in hoc vires suas advocet, duram iam et veterem animis extrahet pestem.

Seneca, *Epistles* 94.24.

In his analysis of the function and use of advice and precepts, Seneca admits that not even philosophy can be beneficial and sufficient to cure a chronic disease, such as *insania* and *furor*. He admits the remedial and relieving function of advice (including both precepts and philosophy, of which the former is concerned with the particular and the latter with the universal: *Quid enim interest inter decreta philosophiae et praecepta, nisi quod illa generalia praecepta sunt, haec specialia? Utraque res praecipit, sed altera in totum, particulatim altera, Epistles* 94.31). However, although admonition, as discussed in the second chapter of the current thesis, is a useful tool to promote mental health and morality, nothing will suffice for the restoration of a destroyed mind and a vicious temperament,[622] when the chronic disease has corrupted the human soul and led it to the irreversible stage of *insania,* not even philosophy.[623]

Seneca aims to highlight the importance of addressing passions before they completely corrupt one's mind and personality, thereby fostering a vicious disposition. This is the use of the tragedies, which through admonition, exhortation and precepts, show the last stage of madness and the inevitable destruction it causes with no hope of restoring one's sanity and personality to a better state.[624] Personal responsibility for one's passions and possible *insania* is particularly stressed by Seneca: *Si vis exercere tibi utile, nulli autem grave imperium, summove vitia.* ('If you would wield a command that is profitable to yourself, and injurious to nobody, clear your own faults out of the way.' *Epistles* 94.60-61). Each individual should be vigilant and observant of their own flaws and take steps to eliminate them. Therefore, since the initial cause of *furor* and *insania* are false beliefs, wrong values and passions, the agent should seek treatment and cure for his soul so that emotional turbulence will not increase and cause destruction. Therefore, people should be aware and careful of their values on what is good and what is evil:

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[622] The word 'vicious' is used in the Stoic sense, which is affected by passions. The human soul can be in different dispositions, either virtue or vice. When the mind succumbs to its passions, vice conquers.

[623] Seneca, *Epistles* 94.31: *"Si quis," inquit, "non habet recta decreta, quid illum admonitiones iuvabunt vitiosis obligatum?" Hoc scilicet, ut illis liberetur; non enim extincta in illo indoles naturalis est, sed obscurata et oppressa. Sic quoque temptat resurgere et contra prava nititur, nancta vero praesidium et adiuta praeceptis evalescit, si tamen illam diutina pestis non infecit nec enecuit; hanc enim ne disciplina quidem philosophiae toto inpetu suo conisa restituet. (*"But suppose," people retort, "that a man is not the possessor of sound dogmas, how can advice help him when he is chained down by vicious dogmas?" In this, assuredly, that he is freed therefrom; for his natural disposition has not been crushed, but over-shadowed and kept down. Even so it goes on endeavouring to rise again, struggling against the influences that make for evil; but when it wins support and receives the aid of precepts, it grows stronger, provided only that the chronic trouble has not corrupted or annihilated the natural man. For in such a case, not even the training that comes from philosophy, striving with all its might, will make restoration.').

[624] For the educative role of the tragedies through precepts about claiming personal responsibility and not valuing *indifferentia, Fortuna*'s gifts, see Chapters 2 and 5.

Nos in lucem, propter quae pugnaremus, extulimus; nos et causas periculorum nostrorum et instrumenta disiecto terrarum pondere eruimus; nos fortunae mala nostra tradidimus nec erubescimus summa apud nos haberi, quae fuerant ima terrarum. Vis scire, quam falsus oculos tuos deceperit fulgor? Nihil est istis, quamdiu mersa et involuta caeno suo iacent, foedius, nihil obscurius, quidni? Quae per longissimorum cuniculorum tenebras extrahuntur.

Seneca, *Epistles* 94.57-58.

The emphasis on personal responsibility is evident; individuals are harming themselves and supplying the tools for their own ruin. Matters on earth—rather than the gods above—are misleading humans who ascribe significance to them. They forget, however, that only unpredictable *Fortuna* can control earthly things and the indifferents.[625] Therefore, people should constantly be aware of what they desire and focus solely on their freedom of choice and their virtues; they must remember that they are accountable for maintaining their minds in a sane and virtuous condition by preventing passions from ruling their souls.

Seneca again enhances the theory of emotional causation by employing examples and commending cases of monarchs or people with great power, which they usually abuse, such as Pompeius, Caesar, and Marius, who have been driven to destructive behaviour because they could not win their inner battle; they lost control of themselves because of their bad reasoning:

Isti cum omnia concuterent, concutiebantur turbinum more, qui rapta convolvunt, sed ipsi ante volvuntur et ob hoc maiore impetu incurrunt, quia nullum illis sui regimen est ideoque cum multis fuerunt malo, pestiferam illam vim, qua plerisque nocuerunt, ipsi quoque sentiunt. Non est quod credas quemquam fieri aliena infelicitate felicem.

Seneca, *Epistles* 94.67.

A force initiated from their passion (*maiore impetu*) turning into *furor* and *insania* and unhappiness; miserable life and disposition can cause only unhappiness and dreadfulness uncontrollably with increasingly greater force. Seneca advises that these examples and cases of men should be studied so that they incite moral improvement, exactly as the cases in his tragic plays function:

Omnia ista exempla, quae oculis atque auribus nostris ingeruntur, retexenda sunt et plenum malis sermonibus pectus exhauriendum. Inducenda in occupatum locum virtus, quae mendacia et contra verum placentia exstirpet, quae nos a populo, cui nimis credimus, separet ac sinceris opinionibus reddat. Hoc est enim sapientia, in naturam converti et eo restitui, unde publicus error expulerit. Magna pars sanitatis est hortatores insaniae reliquisse et ex isto coitu invicem noxio procul abisse.

[625] On the fickle *Fortuna* and the indifferents as the object of false beliefs and passions, see Chapter 5 of the current thesis.

Seneca makes it clear that the heart, which is the seat location of the soul and therefore, the soul, by extension, is full of evil talk, which likely signals the prepositional content of one's passions, the bad judgments and opinions, which become ingrained and influence steadily and increasingly one's disposition and personality in a negative way. Passions and false beliefs, then, must be replaced with virtue so that moral evil, which is the indulgence into passions-the errors of one's reason which lead to Nature's corruption (*unde publicus error expulerit, Epistles* 94.69), is conquered and man's nature is restored. Otherwise, madness might occur, and it is each person's responsibility to ban it and prevent it (*Magna pars sanitatis est hortatores insaniae reliquisse et ex isto coitu invicem noxio procul abisse, Epistles* 94.69). Here, again, Seneca talks about passions deriving from rational errors and madness as a procedure with a causative link between them. The passions are the causes of madness; it is an ingrained process which starts with one's bad and baneful prepositional content of thoughts.

Scholarship has turned its focus on the nature of the self. There are two leading positions; one of them supports the deterioration and dissolution of the self, whereas the other promotes its creation and perfection.[626] The examples drawn from Seneca's tragedies indicate how the surrender to passions might lead to a division of the self and madness, which constitutes a collapse of the self and character since a passion involves 'internal conflict and disintegration'.[627] Gill thinks of passion as a form of mental disorder or a sickness of the psyche,[628] whereas Schiesaro attributes passions not to the qualities of a disease but to destructive power.[629] To this debate, I would add that passions can form mental diseases as preliminary symptoms- the Stoics thought of all people as fools and madmen[630] in the sense that they all are subjected to false judgements and passions; therefore, passion functions in a causative manner to mental disease, even madness; if one constantly and habitually lets one's self be carried away by the passions, the mental disease occurs.

<u>*Ira* (Anger), *Feritas* (Brutishness), and Crudelitas (Cruelty)</u>

Seneca emphasises that there is a transition from passion to insanity and cruelty when he talks about people with great and destructive power attacking their foes. They were first conquered by their own passion, their desire for power*: sed hi quoque, ut vincerent hostem, cupiditate victi sunt. Nemo illis venientibus restitit, sed nec ipsi ambitioni crudelitatique restiterant; tunc, cum agere alios visi sunt, agebantur* ('But even these men, before they could conquer their foe, were conquered by their own greed. No one withstood their attack; but they themselves could not withstand desire for power and the impulse to cruelty; at the time when they seemed to be hounding others, they were themselves being hounded.' *Epistles* 94.61-62). Their impulse (their

[626] See more in Fitch and McElduff 2002; Gill 2006, Nussbaum 1993/4, Busch 2009.
[627] Gill 2006, pp. 421-422.
[628] Gill 2006, p. 423.
[629] Schiesaro 2003. He uses examples from *Medea* 16-19, 208-214 and *Phaedra* 158. More in Gill 2006, n. 115-116.
[630] See previous sections of the current chapter on the paradox of madness.

passion) led to their *furor, insania* and *crudelitas*, which, on the one hand, made them achieve expanding their borders and their empires, but they morally downgraded them. The transition from passion to *furor* and *insania* is clear, especially when commenting on Alexander the Great: *Agebat infelicem Alexandrum furor aliena vastandi et ad ignota mittebat. An tu putas sanum, qui a Graeciae primum cladibus, in qua eruditus est, incipit?* ('Alexander was hounded into misfortune and dispatched to unknown countries by a mad desire to lay waste other men's territory. Do you believe that the man was in his senses who could begin by devastating Greece, the land where he received his education?' *Epistles* 94.62). Alexander's mad desire and *furor* led him to *insania.* Similarly, Philippus was transformed into a wild and cruel beast: *nec subsistit usquam lassa crudelitas immanium ferarum modo, quae plus quam exigit fames mordent* ('his cruelty was tired, but it never ceased—like a wild beast that tears to pieces more than its hunger demands.' *Epistles* 94.62-63). The *iratus* man, in *furor,* resembles a wild beast in cruelty, which threatens Nature itself (*ipsi naturae vim parat, Epistles* 94.63), and its rage never ceases. In the same vein, Seneca mentions the origin of Gnaeus Pompeius's madness, which was his desire for glory: *Ne Gnaeo quidem Pompeio externa bella ac domestica virtus aut ratio suadebat, sed insanus amor magnitudinis falsae* ('It was not virtue or reason which persuaded Gnaeus Pompeius to take part in foreign and civil warfare; it was his mad craving for unreal glory.' *Epistles* 94.64). Seneca makes similar associations between Atreus's desire for power and his madness in his *Thyestes*; Atreus was not a figure to mimic as he was insane and unhappy as the examples above (*Epistles* 94.67).[631]

The behaviour of the tyrants Seneca describes in his *De Ira* does not pertain to a temporary emotional moment but to an irascible and cruel disposition and behaviour[632] which are already established and deeply ingrained in their souls (*Epistles* 18.15). Hence, the need to lead a life which does not leave room for passions is imperative. Seneca mentions the third *motus* in the formation of passions, which is a fierce condition called *feritas*, brutishness.[633] Seneca describes a disposition that is not anger itself but steams from habitual anger (*Origo huius mali ab ira est, De Ira* 2.5). Therefore, once again, Seneca confirms the emotional causality of great evils and insane behaviours. Seneca gives examples of sadistic tyrants and generals or other leading figures, such as Apollodorus, Phalaris and later Hannibal and Volesus (*De Ira* 2.5-6), who take pleasure in heinous actions and manifest a bloodthirsty nature at all costs. This is not simply anger, since a perceived injury

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[631] On Areus' madness and the false value of *indifferentia* as its cause, see Chapter 5.

[632] Graver 2007, p. 123.

[633] Seneca, *De Ira* 2.5: *Illud etiamnunc quaerendum est, ii qui vulgo saeviunt et sanguine humano gaudent an irascantur, cum eos occidunt, a quibus nec acceperunt iniuriam nec accepisse ipsi se existimant; qualis fuit Apollodorus aut Phalaris. Haec non est ira, feritas est; non enim quia accepit iniuriam nocet, sed parata est, dum noceat, vel accipere, nec illi verbera lacerationesque in ultionem petuntur sed in voluptatem. Quid ergo est? Origo huius mali ab ira est, quae ubi requenti exercitatione et satietate in oblivionem clementiae venit et omne foedus humanum eiecit animo, novissime in crudelitatem transit. Rident itaque gaudentque et voluptate multa perfruuntur plurimumque ab iratorum vultu absunt, per otium saevi. (*'This point also must now be considered, whether those who are habitually cruel and rejoice in human blood are angry when they kill people from whom they have neither received injury nor think even themselves that they have received one; of such sort were Apollodorus and Phalaris. But this is not anger, it is brutality; for it does not harm because it has received an injury, but it is even ready to receive one provided that it can harm, and its purpose in desiring to beat and to mangle is not vengeance but pleasure. And why does it happen? The source of this evil is anger, and when anger from oft-repeated indulgence and surfeit has arrived at a disregard for mercy and has expelled from the mind every conception of the human bond, it passes at last into cruelty. And so these men laugh and rejoice and experience great pleasure, and wear a countenance utterly unlike that of anger, making a pastime of ferocity.')

does not occur, but it is rather a brutish, beastlike mental state, which is beyond the agent's control. However, the source of this evil is anger. The result of the frequent episodes of excessive emotions of anger would be brutishness (*feritas, De Ira* 2.5.85), a term inspired by the physiognomic comparison[634] of the insanely angry man to a brute, a wild animal (*De Ira* 1.1). However, there is a rudimentary logic behind the whole process of the emotional causality of madness, which a wild beast could not exhibit since it lacks the rational faculty. Anger is a brief dose of madness, a strong πάθος, which, if frequently repeated, might bring insanity upon the agent whose mind passes into a different and irreversible state (*Epistles* 94.24). The difference between being angry and displaying brutality is not just some nuance in intensity.[635] A brutish person is not capable of anger since they lack motivation and the sense that they have been unjustly wronged and are entitled to take revenge.[636] On the one hand, though, Seneca mentions that brutishness is a perverse pleasure to cause harm even if the agent's own safety gets in jeopardy (*sed parata est, dum noceat, vel accipere, nec illi verbera lacerationesque in ultionem petuntur sed in voluptatem, De Ira* 2.5) just like *ira*. However, in the case of brutishness, there is a desire for harm for the sake of harm, whereas if the angry man does not wish to punish the person whom he deems responsible for a wrong done to them, he does not desire harm. Therefore, the angry proceed to actions of punishment only when they blindly believe they deserve to take revenge upon someone who hurt them. On the contrary, wild beasts do not seem capable of *ira* since they do not possess reason.[637] Therefore, the main difference between *feritas* and *ira* is that the latter is capable of reason; it would not be able to develop if it were not for the agent's rational faculty. However, the malfunction of reason brings forth *ira*, which, if not handled, provokes *feritas*, which, as a beastlike madness, surpasses reason.

There is some confusion concerning the terms *feritas* and *crudelitas,* which seem to be similar, but they differ in that *crudelitas* does not require human reason, whereas *feritas* begins from malfunctioning rationality.[638] Seneca does not seem to be consistent when describing the term *crudelitas* across the two works *De Ira* and *De Clementia*.[639] However, despite their affinity,[640] Seneca draws a line between the terms *crudelitas*

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[634] On physiognomy in Seneca, see Chapter 3 in the current thesis.
[635] Graver 2007, p. 123.
[636] See Vogt 2006 on anger being classed as a desire to exact punishment or take revenge.
[637] Seneca, *De Ira* 1.3: *Sed dicendum est feras ira carere et omnia animalia praeter hominem; nam cum sit inimica rationi, nusquam tamen nascitur, nisi ubi rationi locus est. Impetus habent ferae, rabiem, feritatem, incursum; iram quidem non magis quam luxuriam, et in quasdam voluptates intemperantiores homine sunt.* ('But our reply must be that wild beasts and all animals, except man, are not subject to anger; for while it is the foe of reason, it is, nevertheless, born only where reason dwells. Wild beasts have impulses, madness, fierceness, aggressiveness; but they no more have anger than they have luxuriousness. Yet in regard to certain pleasures they are less self-restrained than man.').
[638] See Graver 2007, pp. 121-123. On brutishness and *crudelitas*, see more in Graver 2007, pp. 122-125, esp. p. 124 and p. 242, n. 41.
[639] In the former, he implies that *crudelitas* is the pleasure in harming others and is not concerned with exacting punishment, whereas, in the latter, *crudelitas* is presented as the opposite of *clementia*, because it seems that *severitas* cannot be called so due to its being considered a Stoic virtue. In search of the opposite term to *clementia* (mercy), Seneca presents the term *crudelitas* (cruelty), which is a behaviour that tyrants exhibit, and it is defined as a tendency to intemperance in exacting punishment: *Quid ergo opponitur clementiae? Crudelitas, quae nihil aliud est quam atrocitas animi in exigendis poenis* ('What, then, is the opposite of mercy? Cruelty: which is nothing more than obstinacy in exacting punishments.' *De Clementia* 2.4.1).
[640] Seneca juxtaposes a few examples of bloodthirsty ferocious personalities such as Busiris, Procrustes and pirates who kill and torture their victims for the sake of killing, and whose actions do not originate in a perception of injury (true or false) or as a result of vengeance (*De Clementia* 2.4.1). This appears to be cruelty, but it is rather ferocity (*feritas*) since it

(cruelty) and *feritas* (ferocity);[641] yet, the evidence still does not suffice to form a well-developed opinion on the definition of *crudelitas.*[642] However, these states usually coexist. The ferocious man is also cruel, similarly to the angry man who physiognomically resembles a wild beast. The animalistic aspect of *crudelitas* is well illustrated in Seneca, where there is an obvious resemblance between the cruel man and a raging beast (*ferina rabies*): *Crudelitas minime humanum malum est indignumque tam miti animo; ferina ista rabies est sanguine gaudere ac vulneribus et abiecto homine in silvestre animal transire.(*'Cruelty is an evil thing befitting least of all a man, and is unworthy of his spirit that is so kindly; for one to take delight in blood and wounds and, throwing off the man, to change into a creature of the woods, is the madness of a wild beast.' *De Clementia* 1.25.1).

Therefore, the causes of *feritas* and *crudelitas* are different; *feritas* is based on the malfunction of reason, whereas *crudelitas* is the madness of a wild beast, which does not require reason. Animals cannot reason, and hence, they are incapable of anger; they have instincts. Furthermore, Seneca adds that even the facial expressions of brutishness are different from the angry man's: *Rident itaque gaudentque et voluptate multa perfruuntur plurimumque ab iratorum vultu absunt, per otium saevi*. (*De Ira* 2.5). Angry men do not enjoy the harm they do, whereas brutishness pertains to some kind of pleasure, which is evident on the individual's face as joy, smile or satisfaction.[643] Furthermore, the person who exhibits *feritas*, although compared to a brute, is not exactly in the same position. Similarly to a wild animal, he follows his instincts and rages uncontrollably and without

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doesn't meet all the criteria for coming within the definition of *crudelitas*: *Haec crudelitas quidem. Sed quia nec ultionem sequitur (non enim laesa est) nec peccato alicui irascitur (nullum enim antecessit crimen), extra finitionem nostrum cadit; finitio enim continebat in poenis exigendis intemperantiam animi. Possumus dicere non esse hanc crudelitatem, sed feritatem, cui voluptati saevitia est; possumus insaniam vocare: nam varia sunt genera eius et nullum certius, quam quod in caedes hominum et lancinationes pervenit.* ('This appears to be cruelty: but as it is not the result of vengeance (for it has received no wrong), and is not excited by any offence (for no crime has preceded it), it does not come within our definition, which was limited to 'extravagance in exacting the penalties of wrongdoing.' We may say that this is not cruelty, but ferocity, which finds pleasure in savagery: or we may call it madness; for madness is of various kinds, and there is no truer madness than that which takes to slaughtering and mutilating human beings.' Seneca, *De Clementia* 2.4.1-2).

[641] *Feritas* is a kind of insanity which draws satisfaction and pleasure from heinous and barbaric actions with no apparent motivation, and a severe form of madness which must not be taken lightly since it pertains to 'slaughtering and mutilating human beings'. *Crudelitas*, on the other hand, is the lack of moderation in the enactment of punishment in people like Phalaris, who nevertheless do have a certain motive, a reason for their cruelty, usually a perceived crime and the desire to take revenge: *Illos ergo crudeles vocabo, qui puniendi causam habent, modum non habent* ('I shall, therefore, call those persons cruel who have a reason for punishing but who punish without moderation.' *De Clementia* 2.4.3). Therefore, *crudelitas* is 'a tendency of the mind towards harsh measures' (*ut sit crudelitas inclinatio animi ad asperiora. De Clementia* 2.4.3).

[642] For *crudelitas* as a form of madness because of excessive drunkenness, see *De Ira* 1.13.3; *Epistles* 59.15) For the employment of the example of Mark Antony, see *Epistles* 83.25-26: *Fere vinolentiam crudelitas sequitur; vitiatur enim exasperaturque sanitas mentis. Ut querulos difficilesque faciunt diutini morbi et ad minimam rabidos offensionem, ita ebrietates continuae efferant animos. Nam cum saepe apud se non sint, consuetudo insaniae durat et vitia vino concepta etiam sine illo valent.* ('Cruelty usually follows wine-bibbing; for a man's soundness of mind is corrupted and made savage. Just as a lingering illness makes men querulous and irritable and drives them wild at the least crossing of their desires, so continued bouts of drunkenness bestialize the soul. For when people are often beside themselves, the habit of madness lasts on, and the vices which liquor generated retain their power even when the liquor is gone.' *Epistles* 83.26). The constant indulgence of drunkenness might have much more severe results than just one day of recklessness. It can alter one's personality and render one cruel and susceptible to madness, which lingers and transforms one's choices and attitude even if one is not under the influence of alcohol at a given moment. In the case of Mark Antony, there was a more permanent development of a certain behavioural disposition. Graver associates this behaviour with a modern personality disorder called antisocial (Graver 2007, pp. 124-125). However, I would be cautious in comparing modern terms with ancient mental states due to social, anthropological and historical differences and gaps. On the responsibility of the antisocial person, see the discussion in Greenspan 2003 with further literature.

[643] See more facial expressions as manifestations of internal states on Ekman & Friesen 1982.

warning.[644] However, these instincts and behaviour have been developed through frequent exercise of anger and other strong emotions, and therefore, the cause is put down to the rational faculty of the agent.[645]

Furor as the outcome of *ira* in Seneca's plays

Below, an analysis of a few tragic examples follows, which shows that the tragic characters are already in Seneca's third *motus*, madness, and that their hallucinations, which are the greatest indicator of their insanity and mental illness (Ps.-Plutarch, *Placita philosophorum* 900d-f = SVF 2.54), and indicate the initial cause of their madness. Also, the characters prove to have an already distorted and vicious (in Stoic meaning) personality as the narration of the rumination of their past crimes shows that they exercised and acted upon their passions so frequently that they eroded their personality (*Epistles* 18.15, 94.24, 94.31, 94.57-58, 83.26; *De Ira* 2.5) and that the initial cause is not apparent as a physical disease, but it functions within the soul hidden from the others' eyes (*Epistles* 68.8-9; *De Ira* 3.3.2-4).[646] Furthermore, it will show that the characters have personal responsibility for their *furor,* although it is too late to reverse their mental state, as Seneca thought.

In summary, the following analysis aims to demonstrate that Seneca's tragic heroes possess a soul in which *ira* more readily penetrates. It is the soul which is already poisoned by vice and therefore is quicker to anger; characters with such a soul include Medea and Atreus, to name a few. The references or discussion of their past crimes shows that they have already formed an ill-reasoned disposition which is beyond repair. Only in *Hercules Furens* does Seneca leave some room for speculation on his cure, as he shows the hero coming back to his senses and receiving advice and admonition from his father and friend. This means that he has not completely lost his mind or his sanity; perhaps he possesses greater powers and resilience, being a semi-god. However, the play is still in alignment with Seneca's theory on the cure of madness and the personal responsibility to train one's mind according to virtue.[647] Furthermore, the analysis aims to show that the hallucinations and the *furor* of the characters encompass the cause of their *insania*, which is their passions and their bad reasoning. The last point further emphasises the sense of personal responsibility each tragic hero has. The audience is also encouraged to reflect further on their moral improvement with the aid of the tragic *exempla* and thereby become

[644] Graver 2007, p. 123.
[645] The confusion between the terms *feritas* and *crudelitas* persists because, on the one hand, both states are similarly manifested and are evident on the body and face; on the other hand, it remains unclear whether *crudelitas* is a state that does not involve rational processes, since it is defined as excessive punishment, which entails a rational perception of an injury. Furthermore, one could hypothesise that *feritas* originates from erroneous reason and, ultimately, develops into *crudelitas* since it surpasses the control of reason and can only cause destruction, in contrast to animals that exhibit *crudelitas* without having to develop erroneous judgments and passions in advance. However, for this hypothesis to hold, scholars would overlook or interpret differently the passages, which show that *crudelitas* results from excessive anger when exerting punishment.
[646] For Seneca's emphasis on the need to bring before one's eyes what is hidden in one's soul, see Chapter 3.
[647] For an excellent analysis of personal responsibility in *Hercules Furens*, see Riley 2008, pp. 76-84. See also Papadopoulou 2004 for an analysis of the ingrained ambivalence and arrogance in *Hercules Furens* as a cause of the hero's misfortunes instead of the divine providence, and the contrast with Euripidean *Herakles*.

aware of their personal responsibility for not leaving their passions unchecked by regularly examining their inner thoughts, values, and opinions.[648]

Medea

The emotional causality of madness in Seneca's *Medea* is evident. Medea already possesses a distorted personality, very quick to anger, which drives her to seek revenge for every wrong she perceives. In lines 893-957,[649] she still experiences an internal conflict about whether she should kill the children and which role of herself is to prevail; herself as a loving mother or as a betrayed and exiled wife. Should her virtuous duty towards her children or her violent passions prevail? It is interesting that the moment she gives her assent to anger (*rursus increscit dolor / et fervet odium, repetit invitam manum / antiqua Erinys. ira, qua ducis, sequor.* 'Once more my pain grows and my hatred burns, the Erinys of old demands my reluctant hand again. Anger, where you lead, I follow.' *Medea* 951-953). Seneca confirms that madness derives from unchecked passion, such as *ira* (*Epistles* 18.14; 18.15). When Medea hears the wedding bells, which automatically function as a trigger to Jason's treason, and seeks revenge: *incerta vecors mente non sana feror / partes in omnes. unde me ulcisci queam?*('Perplexed and frenzied and maddened I turn one way and another. Where could I find revenge?' *Medea* 124-125), despite her simultaneous inner conflict (*Medea* 116-122; 137-149);[650] her *furor* is quicker, as Jason confirms that Medea's heart is too quick to anger: *Quin potius ira concitum pectus doma, / placare natis, Medea* 506-507). Here, there is an impersonation of *furor* as a Furia, who demands that Medea kill her children and commit a vengeful crime. Almost immediately after she assents to her passion (*ira, qua ducis, sequor. Medea* 953), she experiences hallucinations, which is a dominant trait of clinical insanity and madness, which, however, reveal their cause and have an object (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 12.5-6):[651]

> *Quonam ista tendit turba Furiarum impotens?*
> *quem quaerit aut quo flammeos ictus parat,*
> *aut cui cruentas agmen infernum faces*
> *intentat? ingens anguis excusso sonat*
> *tortus flagello. quem trabe infesta petit*

[648] For the role of the audience, see Chapter 2 of the current thesis, whereas for the role of false opinions, indifferents and wrong judgments and values, see Chapter 5. For the mental representations leading to moral development, see Chapter 3.
[649] See also Seneca, Medea 937-944: *Quid, anime, titubas? ora quid lacrimae rigant / variamque nunc huc ira, nunc illuc amor / diducit? anceps aestus incertam rapit; / ut saeva rapidi bella cum venti gerunt, / utrimque fluctus maria discordes agunt / dubiumque fervet pelagus, haud aliter meum / cor fluctuatur: ira pietatem fugat / iramque pietas. cede pietati, dolor.* ('Why waver, my spirit? Why are tears wetting my face, and anger pulling in one direction, love in the other? Conflicting currents whirl me from side to side. Just as, when the whirling winds wage savage warfare, the contending waves drive the seas both ways, and the waters seethe in confusion: so my heart wavers; anger puts mother love to flight, then mother love, anger. Give way to love, my pain.'
[650] Medea is already looking for an adequate revenge plan, even if she is still of two minds about Jason's innocence. On the one hand, Medea is actively angry at Jason thinking of revenge (*Medea* 116-122), and on the other hand, she thinks of Creon as the culprit of her sufferings as well (*Medea* 137-149).
[651] On hallucinations and φαντασία revealing their cause and objects, see pp. 175-178 in the current chapter.

Megaera? cuius umbra dispersis venit
incerta membris?

Seneca, *Medea* 958-964.

Medea, who first visualised a Furia as her passion, now sees the Furies threatening her and coming after her. She specifically sees Megaera, who symbolises Rage and Jealousy, not irrelevant to Medea's personal story. Along the Furies, Medea discerns another figure coming towards her; her brother:

frater est, poenas petit.
dabimus, sed omnes. fige luminibus faces,
lania, perure, pectus en Furiis patet.
Discedere a me, frater, ultrices deas
manesque ad imos ire securas iube;
mihi me relinque et utere hac, frater, manu
quae strinxit ensem. victima manes tuos
placamus ista.

Seneca, *Medea* 964-971.

Medea hallucinates her brother, whom she killed and whose pieces are scattered all over the sea, to distract her father from chasing her. Within her hallucination, Medea believes that her brother and the Furies want revenge and seek amends for her crimes. The Furies bring torches with fire (*Medea* 965-966). Seneca compares madness with fire: *Sic ignis non refert quam magnus, sed quo incidat. Nam etiam maximum solida non receperunt; rursus arida et corripi facilia scintillam quoque fovent usque in incendium.* ('Similarly with fire; it does not matter how great is the flame, but what it falls upon. For solid timbers have repelled a very great fire; conversely, dry and easily inflammable stuff nourishes the slightest spark into a conflagration.' *Epistles* 18.15; also in *De Ira* 3.1.1). Furies bring fire to Medea as if they bring her madness, and most importantly her soul is ready for it like timber is for fire (*Medea* 965-966). She completely allows her madness to change the way she filters and interprets reality; her sense of self collapses, and she is prey to her passions and madness, meaning the hallucinations of the *Furiae* (*fige luminibus faces, / lania, perure, pectus en Furiis patet. Medea* 965-966). Her mind confuses reality and illusion; she thinks it is for her brother that she needs to take revenge instead of her; her past crimes come heavy on her. Crime after crime and passion after passion, she gradually lost herself and now suffers from a permanent disease (*Epistles* 75.11-14) as Medea did not suddenly get mad; as she frequently indulged in her passions of *ira*. Her hallucinations and final actions, her *scelus*, are the climax of an internal, ill-reasoned mental process, of which there are hints evident right from the start of the play. The plot starts with Medea mentioning Jason's oath to her (*quosque iuravit mihi / deos Iason. Medea* 7-8). After Jason's treason, Medea's anger is evident

(*Medea* 10-12),[652] which leads her to cursing and summoning the avenging Furies (*sceleris ultrices deae, Medea* 13).[653] Therefore, here is the second *motus* of anger; Medea has already assented to the judgment that Jason wronged her and that it is appropriate to take revenge, in accordance with Seneca's three-fold formation of passions (*De Ira* 2.4.2). Although Medea recognises her *furor*'s monstrosity (*melius, a, demens furor! Medea* 930), but she consciously gave her assent her passions. Bán astutely points out that Medea is not making her decisions out of *impetus* or unawares but rather 'in the state of full conscience that her deed is wrong'.[654] Frequent exercise of passions has poisoned her ingenium and led to madness gradually. The reason as Bán explains is that Medea let herself be immersed in her 'anger and imaginations' (*Medea* 40, 46-48).[655] Chasing 'false dream images'[656] as if they were real is a symptom of madness: *insanos falsae rerum imagines agitant* ('false conceptions of things render them mad. *De Tranquillitate Animi* 12.5).[657] People develop a habit of believing their false impressions, the images created in their minds because of false values, and they gradually poison their mind, becoming mad: *Nam ne illi quidem sine aliqua spe moventur; proritat illos alicuius rei species, cuius vanitatem capta mens non coarguit.* ('For even madmen do not become agitated without some hope; they are excited by the mere appearance of some object, the falsity of which is not apparent to their afflicted mind.' *De Tranquillitate Animi* 12.5-6).

Seneca confirms Medea's madness by portraying her as ecstatic and deranged as she performs the incantation to prepare the magic poison for the royals family's murder (*Medea* 740-848). As she pleads to subterranean and sinister powers or deities, she gives the audience images of her appearance which reveals her mad mental state: *Tibi more gentis vinculo solvens comam / secreta nudo nemora lustravi pede* ('For you I have loosed my hair in the style of my people and paced your sequestered groves with naked feet.' *Medea* 752-753).[658] Also, the connection between *ira, furor*, madness, the upcoming *scelus*, the frenzied appearance of Medea and her comparison to a maenad is evident in the chorus's words: *Quonam cruenta maenas / praeceps amore saevo / rapitur? quod impotenti / facinus parat furore? / vultus citatus ira / riget, et caput feroci / quatiens superba motu / regi minatur ultro.* ('Where is the bloodstained maenad being driven impetuously by savage love? What crime is she planning in uncurbed fury? Her face is sharpened with anger and set; she tosses her head with fierce and arrogant movements and actually threatens the king.' *Medea* 849-856).

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[652] In *Medea* 10-12, Medea admits that even Hades treated Persephone better than Jason treated her.
[653] Medea wished for the Furies to take revenge because they must have been above her cursed wedding bed (*Medea* 12-24).
[654] Bán 2019, p. 10.
[655] Bán 2019, p. 10.
[656] Bán 2019, p. 11.
[657] See Chapter 3 for power of imagination to stir one's mind.
[658] See also Seneca, *Medea* 801-811: *Tibi mota caput / flexa voces cervice dedi, / tibi funereo de more iacens / passos cingit vitta capillos, / tibi iactatur / tristis Stygia ramus ab unda, / tibi nudato pectore maenas / sacro feriam bracchia cultro. / manet noster sanguis ad aras: / assuesce, manus, stringere ferrum / carosque pati posse cruores— / sacrum laticem percussa dedi*. ('For you I have given tongue, with arching neck and tossing head; for you, hanging down in funeral style, this wool band circles my spreading hair. For you I wave a somber branch from the Stygian stream. For you like a maenad with breast bared I shall strike my arms with the holy knife. My blood must flow onto the altar. Get used, my hands, to drawing steel and enduring the feel of your own dear blood. With a blow I have offered the flowing sacrament.').

Furthermore, Medea catalogues a few of her past crimes, especially her brother's murder, which she claims to have done out of love (*Medea* 126-136). Medea's love interferes with her anger. However, her love does not indicate that Medea is thinking more virtuously or that her motive is in accordance with right reason. Her love is also a passion, and she gives it as a motive and justification for her crimes. Especially for a person with such an intense, distorted, and fragmented personality as Medea, every passion is likely to lead to pain and death: *funestum impie / quam saepe fudi sanguinem—et nullum scelus / irata feci: saevit infelix amor* ('How often have I spilled blood fatally—kindred blood! And yet I did no crime from anger; the cruelty came from my unhappy love.' *Medea* 134-136). Seneca remarks that love is also a passion: *In omnes personas hic exardescit affectus; tam ex amore nascitur quam ex odio, non minus inter seria quam inter lusus et iocos.* ('But indeed this emotion blazes out against all sorts of persons; it springs from love as much as from hate, and shows itself not less in serious matters than in jest and sport.' *Epistles* 18.15). *Amor* functions similarly to *ira*, potentially leading to *furor* (*Epistles* 18.15), as happens with Medea, who completely gives in her passion and is ready to realise her plan:

> *Amas adhuc, furiose, si satis est tibi*
> *caelebs Iason. quaere poenarum genus*
> *haud usitatum, iamque sic temet para:*
> *fas omne cedat, abeat expulsus pudor;*
> *vindicta levis est quam ferunt purae manus.*
> *incumbe in iras teque languentem excita,*
> *penitusque veteres pectore ex imo impetus*
> *violentus hauri.*
>
> Seneca, *Medea* 897-904.

Medea shows various features of anger which are evident in Seneca's *De Ira*. Great sufferings and anger cannot hide and want immediate confrontation (*magna non latitant mala. / libet ire contra, Medea* 156-157). Seneca also admits that anger cannot hide: *Cetera licet abscondere et in abdito alere; ira se profert et in faciem exit, quantoque maior, hoc effervescit manifestius.* ('Other vices may be concealed and cherished in secret; anger shows itself openly and appears in the countenance, and the greater it is, the more visibly it boils forth.' *De Ira* 1.1.5). Anger, acting as short madness (*De Ira* 1.1.1-2),[659] cannot cease or stop (*aeque enim impotens sui est,* 'For it is equally devoid of self-control.' *De Ira* 1.1.2), as Medea herself ironically admits: *Difficile quam sit animum*

[659]Seneca, *De Ira* 3.1.2-3: *Quidam itaque e sapientibus viris iram dixerunt brevem insaniam; aeque enim impotens sui est, decoris oblita, necessitudinum immemor, in quod coepit pertinax et intenta, rationi consiliisque praeclusa, vanis agitata causis, ad dispectum aequi verique inhabilis, ruinis simillima, quae super id quod 3oppressere franguntur. Ut scias autem non esse sanos quos ira possedit, ipsum illorum habitum intuere* ('Certain wise men, therefore, have claimed that anger is temporary madness. For it is equally devoid of self-control, forgetful of decency, unmindful of ties, persistent and diligent in whatever it begins, closed to reason and counsel, excited by trifling causes, unfit to discern the right and true—the very counterpart of a ruin that is shattered in pieces where it over-whelms. But you have only to behold the aspect of those possessed by anger to know that they are insane.').

ab ira flectere / iam concitatum ('How difficult it is to turn a mind from anger once it is aroused.' *Medea* 203-204). The Nurse confirms that Medea experiences a crazy passion she should hinder since nothing can save her now- even its suppression (*Siste furialem impetum,alumna; / vix te tacita defendit quies, Medea* 157-158). She also calls her 'mad woman' during her efforts: *Compesce verba, parce iam, demens, minis / animosque minue; tempori aptari decet* ('Control your words, give up your threats now, crazy woman, subdue your proud spirit; it is right to adapt to circumstances.' *Medea* 174-175). However, her attempts to reason with Medea are fruitless and pointless (*Medea* 150-176), as Medea has reached the point that she cannot cure her rage (*Epistles* 94.24; 75.11-14). Medea confirms her own madness, revealing the lasting scar and ill state of mind caused by the frequent exercise of professed anger: *fructus est scelerum tibi nullum scelus putare* ('The benefit of your crimes is that you think nothing a crime.' *Medea* 564-565). Medea's *ira* and *furor* increase and her indulgence in passion is frequently confirmed. The Nurse gives a physiognomic description of Medea's madness, comparing her to a Maenad (*Medea* 380-396), revealing her familiarity with Medea's condition as she recognises *Furor* on her face: *vultum Furoris cerno* ('I see the face of Rage'. *Medea* 396). The Nurse acknowledges the magnitude and the enormous scale of the upcoming horror Medea prepares: *vidi furentem saepe et aggressam deos, / caelum trahentem: maius his, maius parat / Medea monstrum* ('I have often seen her raging, assailing the gods, drawing down the heavens; greater than that, greater still is the monstrosity Medea is preparing.' *Medea* 673-675). In lines 401-414, Medea has already decided to take revenge and destroy everything (*sternam et evertam omnia, Medea* 414), her rage will always grow (*numquam meus cessabit in poenas furor / crescetque semper, Medea* 406-407) and is unstoppable (*non rapidus amnis, non procellosum mare / pontusve coro saevus aut vis ignium / adiuta flatu possit inhibere impetum / irasque nostras, Medea* 411-414). The Nurse, also, highlights the growing and increasing intensity of Medea's accumulated bitterness (*dolor*) which leads to violent rage: *immane quantum augescit et semet dolor / accendit ipse vimque praeteritam integrat* ('It is monstrous how her resentment grows, feeds its own fires, renews its past violence.' *Medea* 671-672). Medea, as the Nurse informs the audience of the scale of her monstrosity: "*Parva sunt*" *inquit* "*mala / et vile telum est, ima quod tellus creat. / caelo petam venena. iam iam tempus est / aliquid movere fraude vulgari altius*". ('"Too small," she says, "are the evils, too ordinary the weapons that earth below produces: I must seek my poisons from heaven. Now is the time to embark on something loftier than ordinary criminality."' *Medea* 690-693).

Medea thinks that her crimes ought to increase and she should surpass her crimes as a girl (*levia memoravi nimis; / haec virgo feci. gravior exsurgat dolor / maiora iam me scelera post partus decent. Medea* 48-50), and that her *ira* (anger) must turn into complete *furor* (rage), as it happened: *accingere ira, teque in exitium para / furore toto.* ('Armor yourself with anger, prepare to wreak destruction with full rage.' *Medea* 51-52). Anger never ceases to destruct and is never satisfied, as madness is a fiery disease stemming from anger:

> *Quod maxime desiderasti, Novate, nunc facere temptabimus, iram excidere animis aut certe refrenare et impetus eius inhibere. Id aliquando palam aperteque faciendum est, ubi minor vis mali patitur, aliquando ex occulto, ubi nimium ardet omnique impedimento exasperatur et crescit.*

Seneca, *De Ira* 3.1.1.

Medea's invocation and concession to anger mark the start of her fury. She deliberately chooses and succumbs to anger. It is already known that she tends to act on her anger, which leads her to rage. After frequent and prolonged exposure to anger and fury, she becomes poisoned and develops a particular tendency towards irascibility; she not only becomes angrier more often but also faster. Her personality adopts traits of anger and rage, which eventually drive her to madness, as her hallucinations suggest, and culminate in her most unspeakable crime, the murder of her offspring. Medea's upcoming revenge will be much more damaging than her love-crimes were, which she committed solely as a girl but now she has given birth, and her pain (*dolor*) has grown: *haec virgo feci. gravior exsurgat dolor: / maiora iam me scelera post partus decent* ('I did all this as a girl. My bitterness must grow more weighty: greater crimes become me now, after giving birth.' *Medea* 49-50). Medea shows that *ira* is a far more destructive passion which grows, never ceases, turning into *feritas* that manifests in her behaviour, starting as an ingrained trait and being externalised in her actions (*De Ira* 2.4.2) and grows: *quidquid admissum est adhuc, / pietas vocetur. hoc agam et faxo sciant / quam levia fuerint quamque vulgaris notae / quae commodavi scelera. prolusit dolor / per ista noster* ('Let any deed committed so far be called love of family. I shall set to work, and make them understand how trivial, of what common stamp were the crimes I did to oblige others. Through them my pain was just practicing.' *Medea* 904-908). Medea compares her current self to herself as a girl and the abilities her rage had. She shows that her rage and madness are formed gradually, and the more she practised in crime and passions, the greater these developed, leaving a permanent scar in her personality:

> *Quid manus poterant rudes*
> *audere magnum, quid puellaris furor?*
> *Medea nunc sum: crevit ingenium malis.*

Seneca, *Medea* 908-910.

Medea describes herself as now on a higher level, capable of loftier achievements. An association of the use of the word *ingenium* (*Medea* 910) could occur with Seneca's use of the word in his prose. Seneca quotes Aristotle's famous words: *sive Aristoteli 'nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae fuit'* ('or with Aristotle that "no great genius has ever existed without some touch of madness"' *De Tranquillitate Animi* 17.10; Aristotle, *Problemata* 30.1; Plato, *Phaedrus* 245 A). Seneca agrees: *non potest grande aliquid et super ceteros loqui nisi mota mens.* ('be that as it may, the lofty utterance that rises above the attempts of others is impossible unless the mind is excited.' *De Tranquillitate Animi* 17.10-11). One needs a little frenzy so that fear does not stop them from pursuing what they wish for (*De Tranquillitate Animi*, 17.11). However, this statement seems to be confusing since Medea goes beyond mortals as Seneca points (*tunc demum aliquid cecinit grandius ore mortali*, 'then alone

it chants a strain too lofty for mortal lips.' *De Tranquillitate Animi* 17.11), but uses her *ingenium* for evil purposes. Why would one not want to mimic and follow Medea's example since she reaches the sublime? (*sublime*, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, 17.11). Seneca, though, does not assign any moral value to *ingenium*; on the contrary, he warns the reader to always take care of our mind and be vigilant, as vices steal upon it 'unawares':

> *Habes, Serene carissime, quae possint tranquillitatem tueri, quae restituere, quae subrepentibus vitiis resistant. Illud tamen scito, nihil horum satis esse validum rem imbecillam servantibus, nisi intenta et adsidua cura circumit animum labentem.*
>
> Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi* 17.12.

Therefore, one should be careful because there is an innate genius which might turn into vice as it steals upon one's mind without one even noticing. Hence, madness does not suddenly occur; it is being cultivated in one's mind slowly and gradually.

Seneca, wishes that one uses their *ingenium* and always processes it through reason and values, similarly to bees which take flavours for many flowers but make their own compound; Seneca wants his reader use their *ingenium* and wisdom and values together: *deinde adhibita ingenii nostri cura et facultate in unum saporem varia illa libamenta confundere* ('then, by applying the supervising care with which our nature has endowed us,—in other words, our natural gifts,—we should so blend those several flavours into one delicious compound.' *Epistles* 84.5). Medea is not walking the path of greatness and loftiness, because she follows her false believes about *indifferentia,* the gifts of *Fortuna*.[660]

> *Confragosa in fastigium dignitatis via est; at si conscendere hunc verticem libet, cui se fortuna summisit, omnia quidem sub te, quae pro excelsissimis habentur, aspicies, sed tamen venies ad summa per planum. Vale.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 84.13.

One needs to gradually and painstakingly cultivate one's reason and wisdom so that one's evaluative beliefs lead to virtue. A reason, a mind, an *ingenium*, as Medea's, which errs and places false value on external things with no intrinsic importance, cannot be lofty or sublime: *Ultio doloris confessio est; non est magnus animus, quem incurvat iniuria.* ('Revenge is the confession of a hurt; no mind is truly great that bends before injury.' *De Ira* 3.5.8). Medea's ingenium is not virtuous as she act upon a perceived unjury: *At ille ingens animus et verus aestimator sui non vindicat iniuriam, quia non sentit.* ('But the really great mind, the mind that has taken the true measure of itself, fails to revenge injury only because it fails to perceive it.' *De Ira* 3.5.7-8).

[660] For more on *Fortuna* and *indifferentia*, see Chapter 5 in the current thesis.

Hercules Furens

In the same manner that Medea's *ingenium* has taken a wrong path, Heracles Furens and Thyestes, in the homonymus plays, also develop a twisted and evil sense of reason and *ingenium*, as true moral virtue and wisdom elude them; Hercules is blinded in certain moments but there is still room to heal (*Epistles* 75.11-14), whereas Thyestes is deeply absorbed in his imaginations for power and revenge as shown in later sections.

The stages of madness and passion (*De Ira* 2.4.2) are evident in *Hercules Furens,* where Seneca presents most adequately the reasons and the results of Hercules' mental state. It is to be shown that the hero's desires and fears, his wrong judgments and his passions reach a peak and they cause the hallucinations, a sign of clinical insanity. Despite the traditional Greek view that divine θεοδικία is responsible for the madness of the tragic figures, Seneca shows the psychological and emotional causality of Hercules' madness and through a series of mental events and behavioural patterns, he points to the ingrained *furor* of the protagonist, an 'inward, psychological actuation of the madness' as Riley maintains[661] in contrast to Seneca's critics Motto and Clark[662] who fail to see the gradual continuity of Hercules' *ira* turning into *furor* as Seneca describes fro chronic diseases such as *furor* (*Epistles* 75.11-14). Indeed, a part of Senecan *Hercules Furens'* critics blame the gods for the hero's misfortunes, whereas the rest of them argue that 'insanity originates in his psyche and develops gradually'.[663] Papadopoulou, in her fascinating paper on Euripidean and Senecan Herakles and Heracles' ambivalence, stresses the hero's 'inherently dangerous aspects' and the association between madness and the hero's nature, pointing to Hercules' ambivalence, arrogance and uncontrollable eagerness for action and revenge.[664] Papadopoulou argues interestingly that Hercules' ambivalence is an integral and standard characteristic of his, claiming that the two opposite extremes of Hercules, the great benefactor and the personification of hubris, evolve in tandem, representing the bipolarity between good and evil.[665] The argument of ambivalence, seen as integral bipolarity between good and evil, vice and virtue, indicates the function of passions. According to Stoic monism and Seneca, one's soul shifts between vice or passions, meaning bad reasoning, and virtue or good, meaning right reason (Seneca, *De Ira* 2.1.3-5). It is an internal mental conflict. If the soul assents to the evil side, there is no way back to reason, and gradually an uncontrolled state of mind develops (Seneca, *De Ira* 1.8.1-3; 2.4.4).

Seneca shows both in the play and his prose that anger rises from most trivial things and mounts to monstrous size (*ex levissimis enim in maxima evadit, De Ira* 3.1.5), and it does not make any exceptions for any class of man (*nullum genus excipit, De Ira* 3.2.1), not even a semi-god such as Hercules,[666] even if one gives the

[661] Riley 2008, pp. 76-77.
[662] Motto and Clark 1994, pp. 269-272. For a defence in favour of the theory that Hercules is a victim of the gods, see Motto & Clark 1981; Lawall 1983; Zwierlein 1984; Billerbeck 1999 (Bibliography drawn from Papadopoulou 2004, p. 269, n. 32).
[663] Papadopoulou 2004, pp. 268-269. For a defence of the origin of madness in Hercules' soul, see Galinsky 1972; Fitch 1987 (Bibliography drawn from Papadopoulou 2004, p. 268, n. 31).
[664] Papadopoulou 2004, p. 281.
[665] Papadopoulou 2004, p. 270.
[666] For Hercules' hubris in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, see Papadopoulou 2004, pp. 274-276.

impression of greatness: *Nihil ergo in ira, ne cum videtur quidem vehemens et deos hominesque despiciens, magnum, nihil nobile est.* ('There is in anger, consequently, nothing great, nothing noble, even when it seems impassioned, contemptuous alike of gods and men.' *De Ira* 1.21.1). It is not the gods who are to be accused of man's misfortunes. On the contrary: *Consilium pro moribus cuiusque capiendum erit* ('Each man's character will have to determine his plan of action', *De Ira* 3.1.2). Indeed, although Juno was the one who sent the Furies, she only took advantage of a pre-existing weakness;[667] Hercules already had a disposition towards ἔπαρσις, hubris and anger, which rendered him vulnerable to *furor* (*Epistles* 18.14-15).

More specifically, Hercules' hallucinations start in lines 939 as soon as he gives in to his megalomania and passion, which is the beginning of madness (*Epistles* 18.14-15): *Si quod etiamnum est scelus / latura tellus, properet, et si quod parat / monstrum, meum sit.*('If the earth is even now to produce some wickedness, let it come quickly; if she is furnishing some monster, let it be mine.' *Hercules Furens* 937-939). On the one hand, Hercules desires to vanquish all evil from earth, but on the other hand, he is consumed with rage and invites the monstrous (*monstrum*) and the evil (*scelus*). Ironically, the monster becomes himself and causes the destruction from which he desperately wants to protect the world. Hercules's insanity is revealed both outwardly, as *ira* and *furor* cannot hide (*De Ira* 1.1.5), and also verbally when he notices a sudden darkness on the sky: *Sed quid hoc? medium diem / cinxere tenebrae.* 'But what is this? Midday is shrouded in darkness.' *Hercules Furens* 939-940).[668] He keeps wondering about the darkness as Seneca's wife's blind clown, Harpasté, who did not know they were blind (*Epistles* 50.2). Hercules' sky becomes obscured, which could be a metaphorical sign for his mental blindness, another sign of hallucinatory madness (*Epistles* 50.3-4). Seneca makes the audience aware of Hercules's hallucinatory stage because he assigns to the character of Amphitryon (Hercules' father) to inform them that the sky Hercules sees is illusory and that his reaction is strange: *Quod subitum hoc malum est? / quo, nate, vultus huc et huc acres refers / acieque falsum turbida caelum vides?* ('What is this sudden trouble? Why, son, are you turning your gaze keenly this way and that, and viewing an imaginary heaven with feverish eyes?' *Hercules Furens* 952-954). Amphitryon refers to Hercules's gaze and feverish eyes, similar to angry man's fiery eyes in *De Ira* 1.1.4-5, which reveal the rage of the hero and his insanity, which creates a figment of imagination, which, however is also the object of his insanity (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 12.5-6).[669]

Furthermore, Hercules envisions his first labour, the Lion considered to be equal with the constellation Leo, ready to attack Taurus (*Hercules Furens* 944-952). The rage of the Lion is manifested in Hercules' physiognomic description: *iraque totus fervet et morsus parat* ('burns all over with anger and prepares to bite.' *Hercules Furens* 946); *ingenti minax / stat ore et ignes efflat et rutilat, iubam / cervice iactans* ('he stands threatening with his huge jaws, breathes out fire and glows red, tossing the mane on his neck.' *Hercules Furens*

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[667] Riley 2008, p. 80.

[668] *Hercules Furens* 939-944: *Sed quid hoc? medium diem / cinxere tenebrae. Phoebus obscuro meat / sine nube vultu. quis diem retro fugat / agitque in ortus? unde nox atrum caput / ignota profert? unde tot stellae polum / implent diurnae? /* ('But what is this? Midday is shrouded in darkness. Phoebus' face is obscured, though not by clouds. Who chases the daylight back and drives it to its dawning? Why is this strange night rearing its black head? Why are so many stars filling the heavens in daytime?').

[669] On the exemplary role of minor characters and the chorus in guiding the audience, see Chapter 2, whereas on the physiognomic manifestation of *ira* and *furor*, see Chapter 3.

947-949), reminding the physiognomical description of *furor* (*De Ira* 1.1.4-5) and *crudelitas* (*De Clementia* 1.25.1).

In this maddened state, a series of thoughts reveals Hercules' hubris and megalomania, his *furor*'s cause. His sense of ego has grown since he had conquered both the earth and the underworld through his labours and strength; now he is after heaven: *in alta mundi spatia sublimis ferar, / petatur aether: astra promittit pater.* ('I must travel on high to the lofty expanses of the cosmos, and make for the sky: the stars are my father's promise.' *Hercules Furens* 958-959).[670] He feels he is entitled to seek power in heaven since his father, the great Zeus, has promised him: *astra promittit pater,* (*Hercules Furens* 959). Therefore, the peak of his madness encompasses its beginning, which is Hercules' *ira*; he believes there is great evil in the world that only he can defeat, and he feels entitled to act upon his impulse, to attack and enter the heavens. According to Seneca's three movements in his account of passions (*De Ira* 2.4.2). Hercules meets all the requirements to proceed to irrational actions, meaning his crime. His already formed passion leads him to hallucinatory madness, as he imagines the resistance to his wish to enter the heavens, and he wonders what happens if his father changes his mind and refuses him access to the world of the gods, being unstable enough to turn against Zeus: *quid, si negaret? non capit terra Herculem / tandemque superis reddit* ('What if he should now refuse? The earth cannot contain Hercules, and at last yields him to the world above.' *Hercules Furens* 960-961). He continues detecting enemies and perceived injuries as he imagines Juno's hostility upon heaven's access (*Hercules Furens* 961-963).[671] In the thought that he might be denied access to the heavens, which he is entitled to have, his passion arises. He perceives and assents to the existence of an upcoming wrong by Juno, and he feels entitled to punish and attack the his enemies (*De Ira* 2.4.2). He demands that he be taken inside heaven and he cannot tolerate neither hesitation nor refusal to his demands (*Hercules Furens* 963-965).[672] He mentally then prepares his crime, and his hubris has no limits as a series of threats combined with a terrifying display of his power follows, during which Hercules sets up an entire mission of treason against his father, creating a battlefield between the gods and the Titans in his mind (*Hercules Furens* 965-973).[673] Hercules also hallucinates the Giants and other enemies (*Hercules Furens*

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[670] Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 955-959: *Perdomita tellus, tumida cesserunt freta, / inferna nostros regna sensere impetus: / immune caelum est, dignus Alcide labor. / in alta mundi spatia sublimis ferar, / petatur aether: astra promittit pater.* ('Earth is subdued, the swollen seas have yielded, the infernal realm has felt my onslaught: heaven is untouched, a labor worthy of Alcides. I must travel on high to the lofty expanses of the cosmos, and make for the sky: the stars are my father's promise.').

[671] Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 961-963: *en ultro vocat / omnis deorum coetus et laxat fores, / una vetante.* ('See, the whole company of the gods spontaneously summons me and opens the doors, with one goddess forbidding it.').

[672] Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 963-965): *recipis et reseras polum? / an contumacis ianuam mundi traho? / dubitatur etiam?* ('Will you receive me and unbar the firmament? Or must I tear down the door of the stubborn heaven? Do you still hesitate?').

[673] Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 965-973: *Vincla Saturno exuam, / contraque patris impii regnum impotens / avum resolvam. bella Titanes parent / me duce furentes; saxa cum silvis feram / rapiamque dextra plena Centauris iuga. / iam monte gemino limitem ad superos agam: / videat sub Ossa Pelion Chiron suum, / in caelum Olympus tertio positus gradu / perveniet aut mittetur.* ('I shall strip off Saturn's chains, and against my unnatural father's unbridled rule I shall loose my grandfather. Let the Titans in rage prepare war under my leadership. I shall carry rocks and trees, and grasp ridges full of Centaurs in my right hand. With a pair of mountains I shall now construct a pathway to the world above: Chiron must see his Pelion set beneath Ossa. Then Olympus, placed as a third step, will reach to heaven—or else be hurled there.').

976-981). The objects of Hercules' hallucinations are enraged and prepare for war, which reveals and reflects Hercules' mental state in accordance with Chrysippus' theory about φαντασία (Aetius, *Plac*. 4.12).

Amphitryon warns Hercules to 'banish the monstrous notions' and 'restrain the crazy impulses of his mind' (*Infandos procul / averte sensus; pectoris sani parum, / magni tamen, compesce dementem impetum, Hercules Furens* 973-975). Seneca also advises removing the cause of madness from one's mind, meaning the false opinions and passions (*Epistles* 94.16-17; 94.36). However, it is already late since Hercules has completely surrendered to his impulse, his *ira*.

Similarly to Medea, Hercules hallucinates a Fury (Tisiphone) approaching him with fire in her hands, which symbolises madness (*Epistles* 18.15), and hence signifies Hercules' disease:

> *flammifera Erinys verbere excusso sonat*
> *rogisque adustas propius ac propius sudes*
> *in ora tendit; saeva Tisiphone, caput*
> *serpentibus vallata, post raptum canem*
> *portam vacantem clausit opposita face.*
>
> Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 982-986.

Here, again, Seneca uses a Furia as an impersonation of *furor*, which turns against Hercules and ironically betrays the hero's crime, homicide of his family, as Tisiphone is the avenger of the murderers. Ironically, Hercules' madness leads him to the terrible crime as he thinks he sees Lycus and his enemies in front of him; as a result, he sets off to kill them without realising that it is his own family and he is having illusions of his enemies:

> *—sed ecce proles regis inimici latet,*
> *Lyci nefandum semen. inviso patri*
> *haec dextra iam vos reddet. excutiat leves*
> *nervus sagittas. tela sic mitti decet*
> *Herculea.*
>
> Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 987-991.

Seneca confirms that blinded rage (*Epistles* 50.3-4) drives Hercules' hand via Amphitryon who describes the slaughter: *Quo se caecus impegit furor?* ('How far has his blind fury advanced?' *Hercules Furens* 991). In Wilson's translation of the same line, Amphitryon calls Hercules 'mad' and mentions that he self-destructs;[674] self-destruction is an acknowledged power of *ira* for Seneca (*De Ira* 1.1.1-2). Hercules' rage also confirms the rush in which *ira* functions (*De Ira* 1.1-2): *Ceteram prolem eruam / omnesque latebras. quid moror?* ('I shall

[674] Wilson 2010, p.167, line 991: 'Mad! He self-destructs! How will it end?' *Hercules Furens* 991.

unearth the other offspring and all their hiding places. Why delay?' *Hercules Furens* 995-996). His hurry and reckless attitude bring forward further hallucinations and, ultimately, lead to the tragic murder of Hercules' family.[675] Such an interpretation is in alignment with Seneca's account of passions and his three *moti* (*De Ira* 2.4.2; *Epistles* 75.11-14) since Hercules's *ira* leads to *furor* and *feritas*, the frequent exercise of which leads to clinical insanity (*amentia*) of hallucinations and illusions (*Epistles* 75.11-14) and irrational actions (*De Ira* 2.4.2).

However, Hercules is not irreversibly insane (*Epistles* 94.24). There is a difference between *furor* (rage) and *amentia* (clinical insanity or the loss of one's mind). *Furor* is the rage and mania one feels after surrendering to the passion of *ira*, which is created by the rational faculty of the soul. However, the state of *amentia* is completely irrational since the agent experiences hallucinations and illusions, such as Heracles. Seneca talks about different stages of madness before the last irreversible one: *Secundum genus est eorum, qui et maxima animi mala et adfectus deposuerunt, sed ita, ut non sit illis securitatis suae certa possessio. Possunt enim in eadem relabi.* (The second class is composed of those who have laid aside both the greatest ills of the mind and its passions, but yet are not in assured possession of immunity. For they can still slip back into their former state.' *Epistles* 75.13-14). Hercules is the case of people who are not irreversibly insane: *De illis nunc insanis loquor, quibus mens mota est, non erepta.* ('Note that I here refer to lunatics whose wits are disturbed but not hopelessly gone.' *Epistles* 94.36). The chorus's commentary on Heracles' *nefas* seems to following Seneca's theory as they describe the possible course Hercules' mind can take:

Pelle insanos fluctus animi;
redeat pietas virtusque viro.
vel sit potius
mens vesano concita motu,
error caecus qua coepit eat:
solus te iam praestare potest
furor insontem;
proxima puris sors est manibus

[675] Hercules imagines greater battles with the Cyclops at Mycenae (*Hercules Furens* 996-998). As a result, he finds the first hiding child and before he exclaims: *hic video abditum natum / scelesti patris* ('Here I see hidden the son of a wicked father.' *Hercules Furens* 1001-1002). Ironically, Seneca makes Hercules call himself *scelesti* (*Hercules Furens* 1002) as he is the father of the child he is about to kill; the criminal action renders him *scelestus,* and his soul is filled with vice fueled by the passions. Another instance of illusion is the illusion of Juno in Megara before the killing of her wife and his 'little monster': *Teneo novercam. sequere, da poenas mihi / iugoque pressum libera turpi Iovem— / sed ante matrem parvulum hoc monstrum occidat.* ('I have caught my stepmother. Follow me, receive your punishment, and free downtrodden Jove from a humiliating yoke. But before the mother let this little monster be killed.' *Hercules Furens* 1018-1020). Hercules thinks he sees his enemies, Juno and Lycus's children and immediately wants to kill them. He perceives the child as a monster, whereas he has become the monster as he initially wished that the upcoming evil be his (*Hercules Furens* 938-939), and his father confirms: *vel stipitem istum caede monstrorum illitum / converte;* ('or turn on me that club, smeared with the blood of monsters.' *Hercules Furens* 1029-1030). Hercules' club has been used so many times to kill monsters that it is now smeared with their blood. An interpretation of the foregoing lines would be that Amphitryon talks about his son, who, after killing so many monsters, was metaphorically poisoned by the monstrosity of the act of killing, and now he is the monster.

nescire nefas.

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 1092-1100.

The chorus wishes that *insanos fluctus* (waves or turbulences of madness) release Hercules' soul. However, should this not be, the second-best option to pure hands is complete insanity and ignorance of the evil: *proxima puris sors est minibus / nescire nefas, Hercules Furens* 1099-1100). Therefore, the chorus's wish is of particular interest as it reveals the progression of Hercules's mental activity, and that madness has stages and starts from a cognitive error: *vel sit potius / mens vesano concita motu, / error caecus qua coepit eat* ('or rather may your mind still race with insanity; may blind error continue as it began.' *Hercules Furens* 1094-1096). Hercules's blind error was that his family members were his enemies. However, this error was made within the mental state of madness (*amentia*); the rational error was the indulgence into his passion of *ira*. He reached madness because his anger and rage were so often summoned before that his personality became irascible and quick to such impulses. The frequent exposure of *furor* and *feritas* led to *feritas* and *amentia* (insanity) as hallucinations and illusions (*Epistles* 75.11-14).

The borderline stage is confirmed in the fifth act, when Hercules turns against himself as he wishes to commit suicide out of grief. Amphitryon informs the audience of his mental state: *Nondum tumultu pectus attonito carens / mutavit iras, quodque habet proprium furor, / in se ipse saevit* ('His heart is not yet free of frenzied turmoil; his anger has shifted, and he turns his fury on himself—the hallmark of mad rage.' *Hercules Furens* 1219-1221). It is *ira* that has shifted and *furor,* the mad rage, Hercules is ready to unleash onto himself, committing a second *scelus*. However, this one would not be in a state of complete ignorance and insanity since Hercules does not experience any hallucinations as Theseus confirms: *Herculem irasci veta*. ('Do not let Hercules give way to anger.' *Hercules Furens* 1277), whereas the latter emphasises this time the crime would be Hercules' intentional choice: *Ecce iam facies scelus / volens sciensque* ('See, now you will commit a crime intentionally and knowingly.' *Hercules Furens* 1300-1301). If so, he will have committed a crime in the state of sanity: *hic, hic iacebit Herculis sani scelus* ('The crime lying here will belong to the sane Hercules.' *Hercules Furens* 1313). Therefore, the rational function of the passion is again confirmed and contrasted to the state of *feritas,* which pertains to complete insanity, stemming also from passion but being incurable.

<u>*Thyestes*</u>

Thyestes' protagonist, Atreus, is another tragic character who manifests madness as a chronic disease due to his constant indulgence in passion, anger and desire for power, which has permanently eroded his personality (*Epistle*s 75.11-14; 94.24). Atreus exhibits signs of *furor* and *ira* from the beginning of the play. His first words (*Thyestes* 176-204) refer to his current state as a tyrant: *Ignave, iners, enervis et (quod maximum / probrum tyranno rebus in summis reor) / inulte, post tot scelera, post fratris dolos / fasque omne ruptum questibus vanis agis / iratus Atreus?* ('Idle, inert, impotent, and (what I count the greatest reproach for a tyrant in crises) unavenged: after so many crimes, after your brother's treachery and the breaking of every principle, do you act

with futile complaints—you, Atreus in anger?' *Thyestes* 176-180). Atreus acknowledges his many past crimes (*post tot scelera, Thyestes* 178) and that he is already in anger (*iratus Atreus? Thyestes* 180). These are two crucial points in the current analysis, as they confirm that Atreus is already poisoned by his passions, past crimes, and frequent exposure to them (*Epistles* 75.11-14), similar to Medea. Atreus is not in a curable state; his reasoning malfunctions, and his core is permeated by vice (*Epistles* 94.24). *Ira* rules in his soul, and his reasoning serves his passion solely.

The first cognitive requirement for *ira,* which is a perceived wrong (*De Ira* 2.4.2), has been met since Atreus perceives his brother as someone who has wronged him and poses a potential threat:*proinde antequam se firmat aut vires parat, / petatur ultro, ne quiescentem petat.* ('So, before he strengthens himself or marshals his powers, he must be attacked first, lest he attack me at rest.' *Thyestes* 201-202). The second requirement is the assent to the first judgment of a perceived wrong and the entitlement to avenge the perceived injury (*De Ira* 2.4.2). Indeed, Atreus thinks of his current state as unavenged (*inulte, Thyestes* 178) to be the worst flaw of a tyrant, and also, he explicitly says that he is after revenge for his brother's crimes against him: *relictis bellicum totus canat / populus Mycenis. quisquis invisum caput / tegit ac tuetur, clade funesta occidat. / haec ipsa pollens incliti Pelopis domus / ruat vel in me, dummodo in fratrem ruat.* ('Let the whole populace leave Mycenae and trumpet war. Let all who shield and shelter that hated creature perish in a bloodbath. This mighty house of famous Pelops itself—let it fall even on me, so long as it falls on my brother.' *Thyestes* 187-191). Atreus is willing to start a war in order to avenge his brother (*Thyestes* 187-188). The verse not only confirms the passion of *ira* in Atreus, but it also shows a great trait of anger; according to Seneca, *ira* drags everyone and everything else along with it, including the agent's self (*De Ira* 1.1-2). Indeed, Atreus is furious and he does not care if the whole populace (*Thyestes* 180-189), his own home (*haec ipsa pollens incliti Pelopis domus, Thyestes* 190) and even himself (*ruat vel in me, Thyestes* 191) vanish, as long as his brother is killed and has finally paid for his crimes *(dummodo in fratrem ruat*, *Thyestes* 191).

Furthermore, another trait of *ira,* which also shows Atreus's *furor*, is its thirst for even greater horrors and crimes: *Age, anime, fac quod nulla posteritas probet, / sed nulla taceat. aliquod audendum est nefas / atrox, cruentum, tale quod frater meus / suum esse mallet. scelera non ulcisceris, / nisi vincis*. ('Come, my spirit, do what no future age will endorse, but none fail to talk about. I must dare some fierce, bloody outrage, such as my brother would have wished his own. You do not avenge crimes unless you surpass them.' *Thyestes* 192-196). Atreus's rage demands that he surpass Thyestes's crimes; otherwise, he would not be satisfied: *Nil quod doloris capiat assueti modum; / nullum relinquam facinus et nullum est satis* ('Nothing conforming to the limits of ordinary bitterness. I shall leave no deed undone—and none is enough.' *Thyestes* 255-256); *Nescioquid animo maius et solito amplius / supraque fines moris humani tumet / instatque pigris manibus. haud quid sit scio, / sed grande quiddam est! ita sit* ('Something more, greater than the commonplace, beyond normal human limits, is swelling in my spirit and jolting my sluggish hands. What it is I do not know, but it is something mighty! So be it.' *Thyestes* 267-270); *maius hoc aliquid dolor / inveniat.* ('My bitterness must find something greater than this.' *Thyestes* 274-275). Therefore, at the beginning of the play, Atreus is already consumed by a well-known impulse of *ira*, which demands increasing horror and revenge (*De Ira* 3.1.1), and makes Atreus not care about anything

else, not even the destruction of himself (*De Ira* 1.1-2), as his *furor* only increases and tries to find ways to apply greater horrors and brutality in its revenge (*Thyestes* 196-204)[676] since there is no solution to the perceived threat: *aut perdet aut peribit: in medio est scelus / positum occupanti.* ('He will either destroy or be destroyed. Crime is set between us, for the one who seizes it first.' *Thyestes* 203-204). Not only does Atreus want to kill Thyestes, but he also wants to find the cruellest manner to punish him,[677] which is a sign of *crudelitas,* which is the lack of moderation in the enactment of punishment*: Illos ergo crudeles vocabo, qui puniendi causam habent, modum non habent* ('I shall, therefore, call those persons cruel who have a reason for punishing but who punish without moderation.' *De Clementia* 2.4.3). Therefore, *crudelitas* is 'a tendency of the mind towards harsh measures' (*ut sit crudelitas inclinatio animi ad asperiora. De Clementia* 2.4.3). Atreus could be another example among the rest of Seneca's examples of tyrants and monarchs who developed *crudelitas* and insanity (*Epistles* 94.61-62; *De Ira* 2.5-6). Similarly to Atreus, the tyrants' *crudelitas* only increased, and they wanted to commit greater horrors. Also, when his servant suggests that Atreus kill Thyestes with a sword (*Thyestes* 245), Atreus does not accept it and wishes not only his punishment but also and mostly his suffering, alleging that a powerful king behaves as such: *De fine poenae loqueris; ego poenam volo. / perimat tyrannus lenis; in regno meo / mors impetratur.* ('You talk about punishment's conclusion: I want the punishment! Slaying is for a lenient tyrant; in my kingdom death is something people beg for.' *Thyestes* 246-248). He seems unmoved by the murder and even enjoys it: *quem prius mactet sibi / dubitat, secunda deinde quem caede immolet. / nec interest, sed dubitat et saevum scelus / iuvat ordinare* ('He wonders which to slaughter first, and which to butcher second. It makes no difference, but he ponders, and enjoys order in brutality.' *Thyestes* 713-716).[678] He longs for the spectacle of Thyestes's pain: *libet videre, capita natorum intuens / quos det colores, verba quae primus dolor / effundat aut ut spiritu expulso stupens / corpus rigescat. fructus hic operis mei est. / miserum videre nolo, sed dum fit miser* ('I long to see what color he turns as he looks on his sons' heads, what words his first torment pours forth, how his body stiffens, breathless with shock. This is the fruit of my work: I do not want to see him broken, but being broken.' *Thyestes* 903-907). Atreus will draw pleasure in watching his brother suffer.Atreus takes pleasure in causing pain, as the tyrants in Seneca's *De Ira* (*De Ira* 2.5-6). His rage and *crudelitas* are evident: *non aliter Atreus saevit atque ira tumet. / ferrumque gemina caede perfusum tenens, / oblitus in quem fureret, infesta manu / exegit ultra corpus* ('just so Atreus rages, swollen with anger. Holding a blade soaked in two killings, and regardless of the target of his rage, he drives it violently out beyond the body.' *Thyestes* 737-740). *Furor* drives Atreus blindly (*oblitus in quem fureret, Thyestes* 739) as Seneca believes (*Epistles* 50.2-4). The same pattern of madness, meaning the

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[676] Seneca, *Thyestes* 196-204: *—et quid esse tam saevum potest / quod superet illum? numquid abiectus iacet? / numquid secundis patitur in rebus modum, / fessis quietem? novi ego ingenium viri / indocile: flecti non potest—frangi potest. / proinde antequam se firmat aut vires parat, / petatur ultro, ne quiescentem petat. / aut perdet aut peribit: in medio est scelus / positum occupanti.* ('And what could be cruel enough to vanquish him? Does he lie downcast? Can he abide moderation in success, or inaction in failure? I know the man's intractable nature: he cannot be bent, but he can be broken. So, before he strengthens himself or marshals his powers, he must be attacked first, lest he attack me at rest. He will either destroy or be destroyed. Crime is set between us, for the one who seizes it first.').

[677] Atreus's rage and his exert of revenge and punishment on an excessive scale are also evident when he says that he needs to follow Tantalus' and Pelops' examples: *Tantalum et Pelopem aspice; / ad haec manus exempla poscuntur meae.* ('Look to Tantalus and Pelops: my hands are called to follow their examples.' *Thyestes* 242-243).

[678] Translated by Wilson 2010, p. 201.

increasing and unquenched thirst for even great sorrow and damage and the lack of satisfaction in a common punishment or after one heinous crime, is also evident in the end of Atreus's crimes: *Sceleri modus debetur ubi facias scelus, / non ubi reponas. hoc quoque exiguum est mihi: / ex vulnere ipso sanguinem calidum in tua / defundere ora debui, ut viventium / biberes cruorem. verba sunt irae data / dum propero* ('Crime is owed some limit when you commit crime, not when you repay it. Even this is too little for me. Straight from the wound I should have poured the hot blood into your mouth, so you could drink their lifeblood while they lived. I have cheated my anger in my haste.' *Thyestes* 1052-1057). After killing his brother's offspring in a ritual and giving them to their father as a meal, he is still not satisfied with the pain he caused. He admits that it is his *ira* that was not satisfied (*verba sunt irae data / dum propero, Thyestes* 1056-1057) and was a failure (*Thyestes* 1057-1068). It was *ira* that brought Atreus's madness (*Epistles* 18.14-15). His *ira* now in the form of rage, asks for even greater horrors.

Eventually, Atreus reveals the inhuman punishment as he will use Thyestes himself (*Ipso Thyeste*, *Thyestes* 259). More interesting, though, is the servant's reaction to the choice of weapon: *Maius hoc ira est malum.* ('This evil goes beyond anger.' *Thyestes* 259). This statement confirms that Atreus is in a state beyond *ira*; he has reached madness (*Epistles* 75.11-14). Seneca makes obvious and clear that Atreus has surpassed both the second stage of passions described in his *De Ira* (*De Ira* 2.4.2), and himself as he found the cruellest punishment; his *crudelitas* increases along with his *furor* and *feritas* (*De Ira* 3.1.1); beyond anger, there is madness, and this is the stage on which Atreus is; he is frenzied and mad (*Thyestes* 260-266). However, as per *De Ira* 2.4.2, Atreus has given his assent to his passions and *furor*: *fiat hoc, fiat nefas / quod, di, timetis!* ('Let it be, let this evil come about, despite your terror, gods.' *Thyestes* 265-266).[679] Atreus seemingly lets gods and Nature define his fate, but on the contrary, surrenders to his passions and blames gods for it instead of curing his *ira* (*De Ira* 2.13.1). Atreus' duplicity is revealed when he bans morality and ostracises *pietas* for madness:

> *Excede, Pietas, si modo in nostra domo*
> *umquam fuisti. dira Furiarum cohors*
> *discorsque Erinys veniat et geminas faces*
> *Megaera quatiens: non satis magno meum*
> *ardet furore pectus, impleri iuvat*
> *maiore monstro.*[680]
>
> Seneca, *Thyestes* 249-254.

[679] Seneca, *Thyestes* 260-266: *Fateor. tumultus pectora attonitus quatit / penitusque volvit; rapior et quo nescio, / sed rapior.—imo mugit e fundo solum, / tonat dies serenus ac totis domus / ut fracta tectis crepuit et moti Lares / vertere vultum. fiat hoc, fiat nefas / quod, di, timetis!* ('Yes, I agree. A trembling frenzy shakes my heart, and stirs it deep inside; I am swept away — to where I do not know, but I am. Earth bellows from below, the day is calm but I hear thunder; through all its towers the palace crashes and seems to break. Shaken, the Lares turn away. Let it be, let this evil come about, despite your terror, gods.') The translation was drawn from Wilson 2010, p. 188.

[680] The translation can be drawn from Wilson 2010, p.188.

Atreus consciously invites Furies, who bring fire and madness to his home (*Epistles* 18.15) and symbolise the transition from Seneca's second to third *motus* in *De Ira* (*De Ira* 2.4.2). From anger comes madness; especially in Thyestes, who is already poisoned by the chronic disease of madness (*Epistles* 75.11-14), the outcome will be worse since *furor* on his soul will work as fire on dry timber (*Epistles* 18.14-15; *De Ira* 3.1.1). He desires that his already existing burning rage become crueller (*non satis magno meum / ardet furore pectus, Thyestes* 252-253) and he wants to be filled with even greater monstrosity (*impleri iuvat / maiore monstro*, *Thyestes* 253-254). The servant confirms the frequency in which Atreus acts upon his rage: *Quid novi rabidus struis?* ('What new scheme is your rage devising?' *Thyestes* 254).

Atreus has a megalomaniac delusion of grandeur and hubris: *o me caelitum excelsissimum, / regumque regem!* ('Oh, I am highest of heavenly gods, and king of kings!' 911-912). He watches the semi-drunk and full Thyestes after the macabre meal, expecting his pain to reach its peak, and feels tremendous joy and rapture, satisfaction and fulfilment. Metaphorically, Thyestes becomes smaller and bends, whereas Atreus becomes taller. Atreus watches the degrading state in which he manipulates his brother with wine and admires himself (*Thyestes* 908-919). He feels god. However, even if Atreus seems great and magnificent, he is in fact monstrous:

> *Terribilia enim esse et tumultuosa et exitiosa possunt; magnitudinem quidem, cuius firmamentum roburque bonitas est, non habebunt. Ceterum sermone, conatu et omni extra paratu facient magnitudinis fidem.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 1.20.7-8.

Therefore, even if Atreus seems to have won in the end of the play (*Nunc meas laudo manus, / nunc parta vera est palma.* 'Now I commend my hands, now the true palm is won.' *Thyestes* 1096-1097), he is liable to fall: *ceterum nil solidi subest, sed in ruinam prona sunt quae sine fundamentis crevere. Non habet ira cui insistat.* ('but it rests on nothing solid, and whatever rises without a firm foundation is liable to fall. Anger has nothing on which to stand;' *De Ira* 2.20.1). Atreus seems triumphant but he cannot be happy: *Non est quod credas quemquam fieri aliena infelicitate felicem.* ('You need never believe that a man can become happy through the unhappiness of another.' *Epistles* 94.67). Atreus is not great as greatness of soul cannot exist inside evil natures (*qualis inesse malis ingeniis non potest, De Ira* 1.20.7). Also, Seneca presents as an example of the evil nature the man who utters: *"Oderint, dum metuant."* ('Let them hate if only they fear.' *De Ira* 1.20.4), a famous phrase Accius used in his tragedy *Atreus*.[681] However, who he inspires fear is in reality afraid themselves: *Quid, quod semper in auctores redundat timor nec quisquam metuitur ipse securus?* ('And what of the fact that fear always recoils upon those who inspire it and that no one who is feared is himself unafraid?' *De Ira* 2.10.3). Seneca prompts the reader to connect it with a theatrical line from Laberius 126).[682] Therefore, there is no reason to follow Atreus

[681] Basore 1917, p. 161, n. a: Accius, *Atreus* (Trag. Rom. Frag, v., Ribbeck).
[682] Seneca, *De Ira* 2.10.3-4: *Quid, quod semper in auctores redundat timor nec quisquam metuitur ipse securus? Occurrat hoc loco tibi Laberianus ille versus, qui medio civili bello in theatro dictus totum in se populum non aliter convertit, quam si missa esset vox publici adfectus: Necesse est multos timeat quem multi timent. Ita natura constituit, ut quidquid alieno metu magnum est, a suo non vacet. Leonum quam pavida sunt ad levissimos sonos pectora! Acerrimas feras umbra et vox*

even if he triumphs because he is miserable and afraid: *Quidquid terret et trepidat. Non est ergo quare concupiscat quisquam sapiens timeri, nec ideo iram magnum quiddam putet.* ('Whatever terrifies must also tremble. There is no reason, then, why any wise man should desire to be feared.' *De Ira* 2.10.4).[683] Additionally, the Chorus in *Agamemnon* also confirms Seneca's theory and advise against the desire to be feared: *Metui cupiunt metuique timent; / non nox illis alma recessus / praebet tutos, / non curarum somnus domitor / pectora solvit.* ('They desire to be feared and dread to be feared; no safe respite is afforded them by gracious night, no ease comes to their hearts from sleep, tamer of cares.' *Agamemnon* 72-76).

Returning to *Thyestes*, Atreus mentions that Thyestes has lost control of his rational faculties when he starts singing loudly: *nec satis menti imperat* ('with little control over his wits,' *Thyestes* 919). However, real madness is derived from himself. His enjoyment in Thyestes's pain is also evident in the ways he delays and takes pleasure in the revelation of the murder and the cannibalistic feast, along with the word plays and double meanings in his utterances and verbal exchange with Thyestes, who is obviously in turmoil (*Thyestes* 920-1034). It is also clear that Atreus sets up a sadistic show, a play which Thyestes both watches and in which he plays. A vice needs a stage upon which unfolds: *Ita est: inritamentum est omnium, in quae insanimus, admirator et conscius. Ne concupiscamus efficies, si ne ostendamus effeceris. Ambitio et luxuria et inpotentia scaenam desiderant; sanabis ista, si absconderis.* ('Rather does he spread out his well-appointed vices in proportion to the size of the admiring crowd. It is so: claqueurs and witnesses are irritants of all our mad foibles. You can make us cease to crave, if you only make us cease to display. Ambition, luxury, and waywardness need a stage to act upon; you will cure all those ills if you seek retirement.' *Epistles* 94.70-71). Atreus needed a crowd to watch his supposed triumph,[684] as also did Medea upon her child's murder on the roof of the house while Jason was watching (*Medea* 1018-1025).

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et odor insolitus exagitat. Quidquid terret et trepidat. Non est ergo quare concupiscat quisquam sapiens timeri, nec ideo iram magnum quiddam putet. ('And what of the fact that fear always recoils upon those who inspire it and that no one who is feared is himself unafraid? You may recall in this connexion the famous line of Laberius: Full many he must fear whom many fear, which when delivered in the theatre in the height of civil war caught the ear of the whole people as if utterance had been given to the people's voice. Nature has so ordained it that whatever is mighty through the fear that others feel is not without its own. How even the lion's heart quakes at the slightest sound! The boldest of wild beasts is startled by a shadow or a voice or an unfamiliar smell. Whatever terrifies must also tremble. There is no reason, then, why any wise man should desire to be feared. See also Laberius 126, Com. Rom. Frag. Ribbeck; Macrobius, *Sat*. 2.7.4 (references were drawn from translator's notes a and b).

[683] For the counterargument of the educative function of Seneca's plays and the desire to mimic the vicious protagonists, the emphasis on Atreus's madness would be a key answer. The way that Atreus's callousness and madness are highlighted in the end can also move the audience away from a desire to mimic Atreus because he (seemingly) won and defeated his brother; he has no morality and he is insane. On the apotreptic and protreptic function of the plays, see more in chapter 2 of the current thesis.

[684] See also *Epistles* 94.69-70: *Hoc ut esse verum scias, aspice, quanto aliter unusquisque populo vivat, aliter sibi. Non est per se magistra innocentiae solitudo nec frugalitatem docent rura, sed ubi testis ac spectator abscessit, vitia subsidunt, quorum monstrari et conspici fructus **70**est. Quis eam, quam nulli ostenderet, induit purpuram? Quis posuit secretam in auro dapem?* ('That you may know the truth of my remark, see how different is each individual's life before the public from that of his inner self. A quiet life does not of itself give lessons in upright conduct; the countryside does not of itself teach plain living; no, but when witnesses and onlookers are removed, faults which ripen in publicity and display sink into the background. Who puts on the purple robe for the sake of flaunting it in no man's eyes? Who uses gold plate when he dines alone?').

Until the end, Atreus shows signs of madness and unrepentant pleasure for his actions and draws illogical conclusions which enhance the impression of his insanity: *perdideram scelus, / nisi sic doleres. liberos nasci mihi / nunc credo, castis nunc fidem reddi toris* ('My crime would have been wasted if you did not feel pain like this. Now I believe that the children are mine, and that my bed is faithful and chaste once more!' *Thyestes* 1097-1099). He attributes the success of his crime and the annulment of his wife's infidelity to Thyestes's pain; however, it is insane to draw such an inference since the adultery cannot be reversed, and Thyestes's pain is not evidence of his paternity of the children.[685] Furthermore, Atreus still erroneously believes that he succeeded and forestalled his brother in crime; he firmly believes that Thyestes schemed to kill him, although reality was utterly different (*Thyestes* 1104-1110).[686]

Conclusion

The current chapter examines the concept of madness in Stoicism, with a particular focus on Seneca's Stoicism. Insanity and brutishness pertain to the third movement on the Senecan account of passions after a strong emotion is frequently repeated. Brutishness is not a single mental event; it is not anger, although anger might exhibit cruelty. However, there is a causal link between anger and brutishness. Continuous episodes of anger lead to the soul's sensitivity to certain illnesses and conditions, which, if reason does not intervene, become hardened and deeply entrenched in the human soul, ultimately dismantling oneself and permanently ostracising reason. The angry man becomes an irascible one and eventually a madman. It is essential to acknowledge the individual's responsibility for their mental state. If they surrender completely to vice and brutishness, there is no room for remedy. However, madness does not occur suddenly, but it gradually sneaks through the rational faculties of the soul until it defeats reason. One needs to be aware of one's own mental health and constantly examine one's behaviour, values and beliefs. If they do not give their assent to the wrong judgement, there is no fear for a passion to shape and transform into brutishness due to the complete loss of rationality in time. Furthermore, the severe danger that anticipates anger and transitioning from *ira* to *feritas* render preventive measures necessary. Since tragedy is often associated with the theme of madness and the idea that strong emotions can lead to insanity, the tragic portrayal of the transition from anger to madness as part of the therapeutic process lends Seneca's drama a secondary and preventive therapeutic function. Through the depiction of the cruelty and brutishness of which the human soul is capable, Seneca's tragedy functions in an apotreptic manner. It scares the audience away from anger, reminding them that they are the primary ones responsible for their inner emotional state before the ingrained madness is outwardly revealed.

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[685] Wilson 2010, p. 240, n. 1099.

[686] Seneca, *Thyestes* 1104-1110: *Scio quid queraris: scelere praerepto doles; / nec quod nefandas hauseris angit dapes: / quod non pararis! fuerat hic animus tibi / instruere similes inscio fratri cibos / et adiuvante liberos matre aggredi / similique leto sternere. hoc unum obstitit: / tuos putasti.* ('I know why you complain: you are hurt at being forestalled in crime. What irks you? Not that you swallowed an unspeakable feast: that you did not arrange one! This had been your purpose, to provide similar food for your unwitting brother, to attack my children with their mother's help and put them to a similar death. The one obstacle was this: you thought them yours!').

Chapter 5 – Stoic action theory in Seneca's plays: *Fortuna, indifferentia* and *adsensus mentis*

Introduction

The current chapter aims to find a connective link between Stoic action theory and Seneca's plays based on Stoic determinism, the role of Fate and human responsibility. Passions that lead to irrational actions are based on mistaken judgments that result from improperly valuing things with no intrinsic value, which the Stoics called ἀδιάφορα or *indifferentia*. *Indifferentia* are subjected to the whims of *Fortuna,* the goddess or notion of fortune. *Fortuna* is unpredictable and changeable, so one should not rely on it if they wish to maintain a virtuous and emotionally peaceful life free from passions. In his plays, Seneca emphasises *Fortuna*'s volatile and unreliable nature, on which many people depend for their happiness, but to no avail, as they try to control *indifferentia*. The common denominator which bridges the chasm between Seneca's philosophical prose and tragedies is the focus on the inconsistent and fickle nature of *Fortuna,* and its interconnection with the erroneous judgments and the ill-advised valuing of *indifferentia* (*iudicium*) by the tragic characters, which explain their heinous actions according to Stoic action theory. This connection is underscored via tragic *exempla* in the latter part of the chapter.

In order to demonstrate that tragedies can be read to cohere with Stoic action theory, I analyse the notions of passion such as *ira* and *timor* in correlation with the *indiffirentia* and their connection to *Fortuna* as shown in Seneca's philosophical works *Epistles, De Ira* and *De Beneficiis* vis-à-vis the tragic *exempla* in the plays. More specifically, I provide examples of characters who are victims of the fickle *Fortuna*, to which, however, deliberately gave permission to control their lives, choosing to resist their unchangeable fate.

Fortuna

In traditional Greek tragedy, the gods were often blamed for the heroes' misfortunes, and they were depicted as having personal motives and emotions, behaving in a human-like manner, and emotions, treating men poorly and interfering in their affairs. However, in Seneca's drama, the tragedies are stories of characters who face the misfortunes the goddess *Fortuna* brings upon them and attempt to alter their fate (*fatum*, *providentia*).[687] However, the outcome of their attempts is never propitious, as they are driven by their passions, which were created by their flawed evaluative assessments attributed to *Fortuna*'s whims. *Fortuna* is interpreted as 'fickle Τύχη' as was developed in Hellenism and Ancient Rome; *Τύχη* or *Fortuna* was a deity intermediate between God and mortals (Plinius, *Naturalis Historia* 2.22), who renders everything uncertain and unstable

[687] Seneca uses the terms *Fortuna*, *Fatum*, and *Natura* interchangeably, as they are identified with each other in *De Beneficiis* 4.8.3.

through constant change and randomness*: adeoque obnoxii sumus sorti, ut sors ipsa pro deo sit, qua deus probatur incertus* ('and we are so much at the mercy of chance that Chance herself, by whom God is proved uncertain, takes the place of God.' Plinius, *Naturalis Historia* 22-23). The concept of *Fortuna* as fickle Τύχη and Chance is in agreement with its interpretation in Seneca's philosophy.[688]

Before proceeding to the analysis of the plays, it is important to lay the groundwork for their theoretical and philosophical integrity to delve into the differences between *Fortuna* and *Providentia,* and *Fatum* in Stoic terms, as the perception of *Fortuna* as an evil goddess who brings bad luck and adversity to men contradicts the role of the Stoic benign god, touching upon the matter of theodicy and the problem of evil.[689] Natural evil does not exist since Fate determines everything under a nexus of causes (*SVF* 2.912).[690] therefore, the only source of evil is bad morality, which is also responsible for the *sceleri* in Seneca's plays. *Fortuna* is the enemy of all his tragic characters, as their passions are born because they erroneously attribute high value to external things which only Fortune can control, and which have no intrinsic value, as shown later in the chapter. In Stoicism, there is compatibility between a destiny predetermined by Fate and human responsibility, although the topic has raised many disputes among scholars.[691] The following analysis will demonstrate the significance of personal responsibility in shaping one's interpretation of Fate and destiny in Seneca's Stoicism and how this is tailored to his tragedies. Man needs to follow Nature and *Fatum* that determine one's destiny, otherwise they would be dragged.[692] Furthermore, the concept of personal responsibility and free will (*voluntas*) is emphasised in that the tragic characters are responsible for their *iudicium*, their judgments of *indifferentia*, which distinguish pre-passions from passions (*De Ira*, 2.1.1; 2.2.1; 2.3.5; 2.4.2),[693] which affect their actions. There is personal will even in a word preordered by Fate, which develops self-shaping through self-control and constant self-reflection (*praemeditatio*, *Epistles* 11, 16, 76.34; *artifex vitae*, *Epistles* 80, 83, 90.27; 91.15-16; 98.4).[694]

In Seneca's philosophical works, providence (*providentia*) is a concept which represents the benevolent nature of the gods. Seneca maintains that there is a divine goodness (*Pars naturae eorum est bonos esse. Epistles* 95.36) and that gods would not have reason to cause harm: *Quae causa est dis bene faciendi? Natura. Errat, si quis illos putat nocere nolle; non possunt* ('And what reason have the gods for doing deeds of kindness? It is their nature. One who thinks that they are unwilling to do harm, is wrong; they cannot do harm.' *Epistles* 95.48-49); They also lack human traits such as envy (*Non sunt di fastidiosi, non invidi;* 'The gods are not disdainful or envious;' *Epistles* 73.16), and anger (*hi duo illos oculos orae maritumae effoderunt, non iratus aliqui quem omnino irasci posse negatis, deus* (those two glories of the

[688] On *Fortuna* in Seneca, see more in Fischer 2008, pp. 36f; Wildberger 2006, pp. 47-48; Hachmann 2000; Busch 1961.
[689] The problem of evil mainly includes the paradox of the existence of evil in a world which is governed by a basically benevolent, omnipotent and omniscient god. If the latter predicates are valid, evil cannot be.
[690] For the Stoic conception of fate, see Gould 1974, pp. 17–28.
[691] On the dispute concerning determinism and free will, see Sharples 1986, pp. 266–279. On free will in Seneca, see Inwood 2000, pp. 44–60, especially pp. 44-51 for the debate between traditional theory and summary theory of free will.
[692] See Sharples 1986 for his view in favour of Stoic soft-determinism and the dog and wagon analogy.
[693] Inwood 2000, p. 59.
[694] Inwood 2000, p. 52, n. 57 and pp. 58-60.

seacoast were extinguished by these mortals, not by some angry god—who according to your school is entirely incapable of anger.' Cicero, *De natura deorum* 3.91-92; *SVF* 2.1120). On the contrary, they are kind, calm and forgiving:

> *Quaedam sunt quae nocere non possunt nullamque vim nisi beneficam et salutarem habent, ut di immortales, qui nec volunt obesse nec possunt; natura enim illis mitis et placida est, tam longe remota ab aliena iniuria quam a sua.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 2. 27.1-2.

However, Seneca bridges the paradox by thinking of evil as a challenge for humans, an opportunity to prove their virtue: *Nolite, obsecro vos, expavescere ista, quae dii immortales velut stimulos admovent animis: calamitas virtutis occasio est.* ('Do not, I beg of you, shrink in fear from those things which the immortal gods apply like spurs, as it were, to our souls. Disaster is Virtue's opportunity.' Seneca, *De Providentia* 4.6).[695] This is the role of evil; it tests men's moral principles while they fight with *Fortuna* as a personified counterpart of virtue[696] as all men are subjected to *Fortuna* (*Fortunae regnum,* Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 25.5.; De *Brevitate Vitae* 10.4.; *imperium*, *De Otio* 8.3). People complain against fate, but they are ignorant of its mechanisms and reasons; they cannot understand the use of *adversa* and they perceive it as an obstacle to their happiness rather than an opportunity:

> *Marcet sine adversario virtus; tunc apparet quanta sit quantumque polleat, cum quid possit patientia ostendit. Scias licet idem viris bonis esse faciendum, ut dura ac difficilia non reformident nec de fato querantur, quicquid accidit boni consulant, in bonum vertant. Non quid sed quemadmodum feras interest.*
>
> Seneca, *De Providentia* 2.4.

In alignment with his philosophical view above, Seneca, in his *Oedipus*, present Jocasta explaining the proper role of a king who resembles the Stoic sage:

> *Regium hoc ipsum reor,*
> *adversa capere, quoque sit dubius magis*
> *status et cadentis imperi moles labet,*
> *hoc stare certo pressius fortem gradu.*
> *haud est virile terga Fortunae dare.*

[695] See also Seneca, *Dial*. 1.4.4: *Avida est periculi virtus.*
[696] Fischer 2014, p. 761.

Jocasta welcomes adversities and is brave in front of *Fortuna* in contrast to the king, Oedipus (*Oedipus* 24-28).

Seneca then shows that *Providentia* and *Fatum* (Fate) bring *adversa* to men so that they are challenged since a virtuous life cannot be without difficulties and struggles (*vita honesta*, *Epistles* 67.7). It needs to be tested since god does not want to render humans 'spoiled pets', but he would instead harden them to fit his divine plans (*Idem tibi de deo liqueat. Bonum virum in deliciis non habet, experitur, indurat, sibi illum parat. De Providentia* 1.6). Similarly to the river that is attacked by vast amounts of rain, and to the unaltered taste of sea into which streams of mineral-rich water flow (*De Providentia* 2.1), a virtuous man would not grow weak but stronger due to the difficulties and the misfortunes he would need to face (*ita adversarum impetus rerum viri fortis non vertit ani-mum*, *De Providentia* 2.1). His spirit is much stronger than the external things *fortuna* throws at him at random: *Manet in statu et quicquid evenit in suum colorem trahit; est enim omnibus externis potentior.* ('It always maintains its poise, and it gives its own colour to everything that happens; for it is mightier than all external things.' *De Providentia* 2.1). However, the apparent misfortunes are not evils, because evil things cannot befall good men since the opposites do not mix (*Nihil accidere bono viro mali potest; non miscentur contraria. De Providentia* 2.1.). Of course, Seneca adds, the good man is not completely untouched and uninfluenced by *externa*, and, therefore, human's nature which is susceptible to errors, renders practice and training necessary to his moral development: *Nec hoc dico: non sentit illa, sed vincit et alioqui quietus placidusque contra incurrentia attollitur. Omnia adversa exercitationes putat.* ('And yet I do not mean to say that the brave man is insensible to these, but that he overcomes them, and being in all else unmoved and calm rises to meet whatever assails him. All his adversities he counts mere training.' *De Providentia* 2.2). Nevertheless, what matters is to mitigate and extirpate the emotional turmoil: *invulnerabile est non quod non feritur, sed quod non laeditur; ex hac tibi nota sapientem exhibebo.* ('The invulnerable thing is not that which is not struck, but that which is not hurt; by this mark I will show you the wise man.' *De Constantia* 3.3-4). The constant training will guide humans closer to the model of wise men whose tested moral stability (*De Constantia* 3.4-5) makes them resilient to injuries: *Temptabit, sed non perventuram ad eum;* ('Yes, the attempt will be made, but the injury will not reach him.' *De Constantia* 4.1).

Furthermore, if one's life and virtue are not tested, they will fall into oblivion (*virtus non contingit animo nisi instituto et edocto et ad summum adsidua exercitatione perducto*, Seneca, *Epistles* 90.46; 80.3; 66.36; *dial*. 2 (= *const*.) 9.3; Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.24.1). There is no other way to prove one's resilience to vice and moral strength than to be tested by misfortune; otherwise they will be forgotten:

> *Item dicere et bono viro possum, si illi nullam occasionem difficilior casus dedit in qua una1 vim animi sui ostenderet: "Miserum te iudico, quod numquam fuisti miser. Transisti sine adversario vitam; nemo sciet quid potueris, ne tu quidem ipse." Opus est enim ad notitiam sui experimento; quid quisque*

posset nisi temptando non didicit.

Seneca, *De Providentia* 4.3.

However, despite her useful function, personified *Fortuna* is characterised by various negative traits such as malice, unreliability, change, and injustice (*quam raro fortuna iudicat, Seneca, De Beneficiis* 2.28.2), and is claimed to play games with men (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 11.5; *De Providentia* 3.3; *Epistles* 118.3):[697]

Fortuna illa, quae ludos sibi facit: "Quo," inquit, "te reservem, malum et trepidum animal? Eo magis convulneraberis et confodieris, quia nescis praebere iugulum. At tu et vives diutius et morieris expeditius, qui ferrum non subducta cervice nec manibus oppositis sed animose recipis."

Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi* 11.5.

The evil character attributed to Fortuna is evident in Seneca's plays. The chorus plays a crucial role in showing views of Fortuna. For instance, in Hercules Furens, Fortuna is seen as unfair and evil: *O Fortuna viris invida fortibus, / quam non aequa bonis praemia dividis!* ('O Fortune, ill-disposed to heroes, how unfair to the good the rewards you assign!' *Hercules Furens* 524-525). In *Phaedra*, Fates are painted evil with the cloak of Fortuna: *Providit ille maximus mundi parens, / cum tam rapaces cerneret Fati manus, / ut damna semper subole repararet nova.* ('That mighty father of the world made provision, when he saw that Fate's hands were so rapacious, to make good the losses always with new offspring.' *Phaedra* 466-468). Later in *Phaedra*, *Fortuna* is again blamed for man's suffering:

sed cur idem qui tanta regis,
sub quo vasti pondera mundi
librata suos ducunt orbes,
hominum nimium securus abes,
non sollicitus prodesse bonis,
nocuisse malis?
Res humanas ordine nullo
Fortuna regit
sparsitque manu munera caeca
peiora fovens:
vincit sanctos dira libido,
fraus sublimi regnat in aula;

[697] See also Kajanto 1972, p. 188.

tradere turpi fasces populus
gaudet, eosdem colit atque odit.

Seneca, *Phaedra* 972-984.

Theseus also blames *Fortuna: Equidem malorum maximum hunc cumulum reor, / si abominanda casus optanda efficit.* ('For me, this is the pinnacle of evils, that fortune should make us desire what we detest.' *Phaedra* 1119-1120). The constantly changing and unstable nature of Fortuna affects all kinds of people, especially those in high places (*Phaedra* 1123-1125). It constantly changes:

Volat ambiguis mobilis alis
hora, nec ulli
praestat velox Fortuna fidem.

Seneca, *Phaedra* 1141-1143.

Theseus in *Phaedra* also complains about the gods' rigidity and eagerness for evil crimes: *non movent divos preces; / at, si rogarem scelera, quam proni forent!* ('My prayers do not move the gods. But if I were asking for crimes, how eager they would be!' *Phaedra* 1242-1243). In the same fashion, Thyestes's ghost, in *Agamemnon*, complains about Fortune's gift both to himself and his son:

Nec hactenus Fortuna maculavit patrem,
sed maius aliud ausa commisso scelus
natae nefandos petere concubitus iubet.

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 28-30.

Similarly, Aegisthus, in *Agamemnon*, has made an enemy out of *Fortuna*: *crede perniciem tibi / et dira saevos fata moliri deos* ('Be sure the cruel gods are engineering destruction and a dire fate for you.' *Agamemnon* 229-230).

In spite of the evil character attributed to *Fortuna*, she points to a moral weakness of men; they are susceptible to resisting nature and the divine plan. Should one be less reactive and follow nature and what fate and fortune bring to them, they will be happier and lead an easier life. However, those who do not know how to accept their fortune and resist it constantly complaining and blaming the gods, are bound to intensify and worsen their suffering. People need to surrender to the course of nature, even if it comes in the form of the unpredictable Fortuna who brings misfortunes. Their familiarity with danger will make them stronger:

Numquam virtutis molle documentum est. Verberat nos et lacerat fortuna; patiamur! Non est saevitia, certamen est, quod quo saepius adierimus, fortiores erimus. Solidissima corporis pars est quam frequens usus agitavit. Praebendi fortunae sumus, ut contra illam ab ipsa duremur; paulatim nos sibi pares faciet, contemptum periculorum adsiduitas periclitandi dabit.

Seneca, *De Providentia* 4.12-13.

If man deliberately accepts his fate, he will not bear fortune as misfortune, but he will recognise the true value of its *indifferentia,* which chance brings since they do not matter themselves. Only the way one endures them is important (Seneca, *De Providentia* 2.4) since it is the only thing a man can control; himself and his choices. Therefore, a change of perspective can render men wiser as they can have the opportunity to recognise the divine gift and advantageous opportunity which Fortuna provides to them: *Pro ipsis ergo bonis viris est, ut esse interriti possint, multum inter formidolosa versari et aequo animo ferre quae non sunt mala nisi male sustinenti.* ('It is, therefore, to the advantage even of good men, to the end that they may be unafraid, to live constantly amidst alarms and to bear with patience the happenings which are ills to him only who ill supports them.' Seneca, *De Providentia* 4.16). Seneca presents Electra as a conveyer and teacher by her example of the Stoic message of offering oneself to *Fortuna* (*Praebendi fortunae sumus, De Providentia* 4.12-13) to her angry mother, who threatens to kill her (*At iratae parum. / morieris hodie, Agamemnon* 970-971):

Sive te iugulo iuvat
mersisse ferrum, praebeo iugulum tibi;
seu more pecudum colla resecari placet,
intenta cervix vulnus expectat tuum.
scelus paratum est.

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 972-976.

Electra is not in charge of what *Fortuna* brings and willingly follows Nature. Cassandra is also willing to follow her fate when Clytemnistra wants to drag her away to her death: *Ne trahite, vestros ipsa praecedam gradus.* ('Do not drag me, I shall walk before you. *Agamemnon* 1004). Not only is she not afraid, but she is also in a hurry and feels happy: *nihil moramur, rapite, quin grates ago: / iam, iam iuvat vixisse post Troiam, iuvat.* ('I make no delay, hurry me away, indeed I thank you. Now I am happy to have outlived Troy—yes, happy!' *Agamemnon* 1010-1011). However, Clytemnestra thinks her mad (*Furiosa, morere!*, *Agamemnon* 1012) although Cassandra has already explained Clytemnestra's madness returning as vengeance (*Veniet et*

vobis furor, Agamemnon 1012).[698] Most importantly, Cassandra explains the perishing of Mycenae, blaming Clytemnestra's lust for *Fortuna*'s gifts, which led her to tricks and deceit: *perisse dono, feminae stupro, dolo*. ('perished by a gift, by a woman's lust, by a trick.' *Agamemnon* 1009). Seneca advises avoiding the gifts of Chance and *Fortuna*: *Vitate, quaecumque vulgo placent, quae casus adtribuit, (Epistles* 8.3-4).

Therefore, *Fortuna* is the sum of changeable external challenges beyond man's control. They who place a high value on what fortune brings and takes and try to negate their fate (*quia nescis praebere iugulum*) are fools (in the Stoic sense) since they fall into a cognitive fallacy and try to control what is beyond their limits. They are mad people who are dragged by their passions because they think what *fortuna* brings is important, and try to dominate what is not theirs to rule, blaming *Fortuna* for their foolishness:

> *Dementes itaque et ignari veritatis illis imputant saevitiam maris, immodicos imbres, pertinaciam hiemis, cum interim nihil horum quae nobis nocent prosuntque ad nos proprie derigatur. Non enim nos causa mundo sumus hiemem aestatemque referendi; suas ista leges habent, quibus divina exercentur.*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 2.27.2.

Men are mad and ignorant because they think that all misfortunes pertain to them personally and because they think the gods are to be blamed for behaving in a cruel manner against them. However, they are responsible for their misconceptions and false beliefs about what is important and good in their lives despite their divine origin. Men have reason and god inside them and they are responsible for morally developing and maturing if there is favourable ground[699]:

> *Deus ad homines venit, immo quod est propius, in homines venit; nulla sine deo mens bona est. Semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt, quae si bonus cultor excipit, similia origini prodeunt et paria iis, ex quibus orta sunt, surgunt; si malus, non aliter quam humus sterilis ac palustris necat ac deinde creat purgamenta pro frugibus. Vale.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 73.16.

Therefore, the suffering of humans is caused by their thinking of *Fortuna* as responsible for their own faults and also by their improperly valuing what only *Fortuna* and Chance control, the *indifferentia*, which hold no intrinsic value. The first misconception is owed to the elliptic knowledge of the divine plans. In *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.13-14, Seneca explains that the difference between the nature of man and god is that men's

[698] For Cassandra's madness, see Paschalis 2010, pp. 209–228; Pillinger 2019, pp. 195–225.
[699] Also, compare Seneca, *Epistles* 38.2.1-10. For words as seeds of reason, see Chapter 2.

better part is the mind, whereas, in god, there is no better part than the mind as he is all reason (*totus est ratio*, *Nat. Quest.*1.14). However, men make a fatal mistake:

> *Quo neque formosius est quicquam nec dispositius nec in proposito constantius, existiment homines fortuitum et casu volubile ideoque tumultuosum inter fulmina nubes tempestates et cetera quibus terrae ac terris vicina pulsantur.*
>
> Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.14.

Therefore, in contrast to popular opinion, there is a perfect order in the universe, natural laws, and nothing happens without a cause.[700] However, humankind still feels like they are in the dark: *Volvitur tempus rata quidem lege, sed per obscurum; quid autem ad me, an naturae certum sit quod mihi incertum est?* ('Time does indeed roll along by fixed law, but as in darkness; and what is it to me whether Nature's course is sure, when my own is unsure?' *Epistle* 101.5; *Nat*. 3.7-9.11). It is very reasonable that humans might feel like their life is uncertain since they do not understand how fate functions and what the causes behind it are. However, in Stoic thought, there is a pre-existing divine plan, and Fortune is just another name for Fate from an individual non-all-around point of view:

> *Si, quod a Seneca accepisses, Annaeo te debere diceres vel Lucio, non creditorem mutares, sed nomen, quoniam, sive praenomen eius sive nomen dixisses sive cognomen, idem tamen ille esset. Sic nunc naturam voca, fatum, fortunam; omnia eiusdem dei nomina sunt varie utentis sua potestate. Et iustitia, probitas, prudentia, fortitudo, frugalitas unius animi bona sunt; quidquid horum tibi placuit, animus placet.*
>
> Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 4.8.3.

In reality, then, *Fortuna, Fatum*, and *Natura*, are different aspects of the Stoic god, which is Reason and πνεῦμα. *Fortuna* is a mistaken interpretation of fate (*fatum*). People's experiences are thought to be random and set by Chance. However, men do not know the divine causes behind everything. What *fortuna* brings upon people is not random as many believe, because it is part of the divine cosmic design. There is a cause for everything; however, humankind is not aware of the cosmic plan, although they share divine reason and πνεῦμα, of which their soul is made. As a result, they become perplexed when a sudden misfortune occurs, and they blame the gods, specifically the goddess of fortune and chance, personified *Fortuna,* since they think their misfortunes befall them randomly and unfairly.

[700] See Plu. S.R. 1045b-c = *SVF* 2.973: πρὸς τούτους ὁ Χρύσιππος ἀντιλέγων, ὡς βιαζομένους τῷ ἀναιτίῳ τὴν φύσιν, ἐν πολλοῖς παρατίθησι τὸν ἀστράγαλον καὶ τὸν ζυγόν καὶ πολλά τῶν μὴ δυναμένων ἄλλοτ' ἄλλας λαμβάνειν πτώσεις καὶ ῥοπὰς ἄνευ τινός αἰτίας καὶ διαφορᾶς ἢ περὶ αὐτὰ πάντως ἢ περὶ τὰ ἔξωθεν γινομένης· τὸ γὰρ ἀναίτιον ὅλως ἀνύπαρκτον εἶναι καὶ τὸ αὐτόματον. See also, Sorabji 1980, pp. 255-259.

Indifferentia and *Fortuna*

The first misconception is based on the false view of *Fortuna* and Fate. Human's second misconception that what *Fortuna* brings is important stems from the poor operation of their rational faculty. They make an epistemic error as to what is good and what is bad, valuing things with no intrinsic value as virtuous and beneficial. *Fortuna* is responsible for the distribution, or the cease of the *indifferentia* (ἀδιάφορα*, commoda, incommoda,* Sen. *Benef*. 5,13,1; *Epist*. 8,3; *Dial.* 7,11,3; *Epist*. 97,14; *Epist*. 8,9; *Dial*. 6,10,3; *Dial*. 2,5,4; *Dial.* 7,4,2; *Epist*. 113,27; *Nat.* 6,32,5 ; *Epist*. 98,8; *Epist.* 74,7). It is crucial to examine the connection of the *indifferentia* as products of *Fortuna* in Seneca since this connection will allow a later association between the Stoic action theory in Seneca's philosophical prose and the tragic characters in his plays.

> *Rectum iter, quod sero cognovi et lassus errando, aliis monstro. Clamo: "Vitate, quaecumque vulgo placent, quae casus adtribuit. Ad omne fortuitum bonum suspiciosi pavidique subsistite; et fera et piscis spe aliqua oblectante decipitur. Munera ista fortunae putatis? Insidiae sunt. Quisquis vestrum tutam agere vitam volet, quantum plurimum potest, ista viscata beneficia devitet, in quibus hoc quoque miserrimi fallimur; habere nos putamus, haeremus. In praecipitia cursus iste deducit. Huius eminentis vitae exitus cadere est. Deinde ne resistere quidem licet, cum coepit transversos agere felicitas, aut saltim rectis aut semel ruere; non evertit fortuna, sed cernulat et allidit.*[701]
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 8.3-4.

Seneca quotes Posidonius, who also argues that one should not depend on Fortune but rather on one's own power:

> *"Non est quod umquam fortunae armis putes esse te tutum; tuis pugna. Contra ipsam fortuna non armat; itaque contra hostes instructi, contra ipsam inermes sunt."*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 113.28.
>
> "There are never any occasions when you need think yourself safe because you wield the weapons of Fortune; fight with your own! Fortune does not furnish arms against herself; hence men equipped against their foes are unarmed against Fortune herself."

Also, Seneca, in advising against fear, suggests that a strong mind can endure whatever *Fortuna* brings:

[701] See also Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 13.1.

Tu vero metuenda declina. Quidquid consilio prospici potest, prospice. Quodcumque laesurum est, multo ante quam accidat, speculare et averte. In hoc ipsum tibi plurimum conferet fiducia et ad tolerandum omne obfirmata mens. Potest fortunam cavere, qui potest ferre. Certe in tranquillo non tumultuatur. Nihil est nec miserius nec stultius quam praetimere. Quae ista dementia est malum suum antecedere? 8Denique ut breviter includam quod sentio, et istos satagios ac sibi molestos describam tibi, tam intemperantes in ipsis miseriis quam sunt ante illas. Plus dolet quam necesse est, qui ante dolet quam necesse est; eadem enim infirmitate dolorem non aestimat, qua non exspectat; eadem intemperantia fingit sibi perpetuam felicitatem suam, fingit crescere debere quaecumque contigerunt, non tantum durare; et oblitus huius petauri, quo humana iactantur, sibi uni fortuitorum constantiam spondet.

Seneca, *Epistles* 98.7-9.

Ἀδιάφορα such as health, death, sickness, wealth, and poverty are located between virtue and vice.[702] Seneca believes that one would opt for the preferred *indifferentia* as long as these are in agreement with Nature and they enhance and facilitate the course toward virtue (*Epistles* 74.17) such as wealth (*De Vita Beata* 25.1 1-3) in contrast to luxury,[703] thinking not the *indifferentia* as goods but as a chance for one to get trained and prepared for virtue (*De Vita Beata* 21.4, 3-5; *Epistles* 92.11).[704] However, if one overuses them or values them as intrinsically good, he is condemned to slavery (*De Vita Beata* 26.1, 2-3) as he becomes a slave of his passions, such as Oedipus:

Parum ipse fidens mihimet in tuto tua,
Natura, posui iura. cum magna horreas,
quod posse fieri non putes metuas tamen.
cuncta expavesco meque non credo mihi.
Iam iam aliquid in nos fata moliri parant.

Seneca, *Oedipus* 24-28.

Oedipus cannot endure the adversities *Fortuna* might throw at him. He assigns intrinsic value to *Fortuna*'s *indifferentia,* which has caused him to drown in fear and lose his self-confidence. His fear stems also from his belief that *Fortuna* is a malevolent deity who schemes against him (*Oedipus* 28), and that fate and gods are evil and cruel for not letting him die earlier: *o saeva nimium numina, o fatum grave!* ('The gods are too cruel, fate too harsh!' *Oedipus* 75). Oedipus is afraid of something he cannot control:

[702] Brennan 2007, p. 121.
[703] Motto 2009, pp. 38–39.
[704] See Sorabji 2000, pp. 169-171 on natural *indifferentia*.

Horrore quatior, fata quo vergant timens,
trepidumque gemino pectus affectu labat:
ubi laeta duris mixta in ambiguo iacent,
incertus animus scire cum cupiat timet.

Seneca, *Oedipus* 206-209.

Oedipus tries to control and resist his fate, which will drag him if he does not follow Nature (*Epistles* 107.11; Cleanthes, Frag. 527 von Arnim). In this manner, he deceives himself and blames *Fortuna* for it: *Ut undique in me saeva Fortuna irruit!* ('How cruel Fortune attacks me on every side!' *Oedipus* 786), a reason against which Seneca advises (*Epistles* 94.57-58). Indeed, Creon reveals the Stoic true to Oedipus: *tibi iam necesse est ferre fortunam tuam.* ('You have no choice now but to bear your fortune.' *Oedipus* 681).

However, Seneca prompts the readers to mimic the sage, who chooses to control wealth instead of being a slave of it (*De Vita Beata* 22.5, 6-7) by accepting *Fortuna*'s gifts as encompassing some amount of worth but at the same time lessening them to avoid the formation of a πάθος in case of losing an *indifferentium* (*De Vita Beata* 21.2.1-4). Of all the *indifferentia*, Seneca focuses particularly on wealth (Seneca, De Consolatione *Ad Helviam* 11.6; *Epistles* 82.2; 122.14; *De Tranquillitate Animi* 8.9.1–7; *De Vita Beata* 22.1.1–5),[705] and as it is a product of *Fortuna*, he suggests self-control, the right appreciation of things, the cultivating of autarky and self-sufficiency, and the realization of *Fortuna*'s changeability (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 9.2.1-12). If one is constantly vigilant, one can distinguish between the necessary and the unnecessary (*Epistles* 110.11). One can follow the example of the Sage and adjust their preferences and their needs to Nature (*Epistles* 17.9) even on the topic of fear of death:

Philosophia circumdanda est, inexpugnabilis murus, quem fortuna multis machinis lacessitum non transit. In insuperabili loco stat animus, qui externa deseruit, et arce se sua vindicat; infra illum omne telum cadit. Non habet, ut putamus, fortuna longas manus; neminem 6occupat nisi haerentem sibi. Itaque quantum possumus, ab illa resiliamus; quod sola praestabit sui naturaeque cognitio. Sciat, quo iturus sit, unde ortus, quod illi bonum, quod malum sit, quid petat, quid evitet, quae sit illa ratio, quae adpetenda ac fugienda discernat, qua cupiditatum mansuescit insania, timorum saevitia conpescitur.

Seneca, *Epistles* 82.5-7.

[705] See also Motto 2009, pp. 33–39.

Hence, philosophy is the remedy to fear of death, which is an indifferent (*Epistles* 82.10-17). The Stoic sage would know that one needs to be active and make their decisions carefully, and also let themselves in the hands of Nature:

> *Cui licet nihil facilitate eripi, nihil neglegentia patiatur excidere, licet horas suas avarissime servet et usque in ultimum aetatis humanae terminum procedat nec quicquam illi ex eo, quod natura constituit, fortuna concutiat, tamen homo ad immortalium cognitionem nimis* ***8****mortalis est. Ergo secundum naturam vivo, si totum me illi dedi, si illius admirator cultorque sum. Natura autem utrumque facere me voluit, et agere et contemplationi vacare. Utrumque facio, quoniam ne contemplatio quidem sine actione est.*
>
> Seneca, *De Otio* 8.5.7-8.

One should trust Nature and Fate. However, dependence on *Fortuna* brings no stability since it changes and never remains the same. Especially the reign is something of which people think highly, but it is too an *indifferens* and utterly fragile; it has no intrinsic value and only *Fortuna* stipulates and controls it; therefore, kings and queens should be careful not to live with hubris since they might lose all of their power in the passing of a single day as Medea warns Creon (secretly wishing to persuade him to give her more time), a point to which the attention will be returned later on in the current chapter. The pattern of the changeability of fortune and the fragility of royal power is also evident in Seneca's prose where he claims that not even the tyrants and the kings are immune to the downfalls of misfortune (*De Tranquillitate Animi* 11.9). He also says *Cuivis potest accidere quod cuiquam potest* ('Whatever can one man befall can happen just as well to all!' *De Consolatione ad Marciam* 9.5). Seneca's tragedies are educational because they show what can happen if one follows one's passions and attempts to resist one's fate; it is a scenario which could happen to anyone; therefore, one should be prepared accordingly.

I argue, then, that Seneca employs his tragedies to promote freedom from *Fortuna*'s callousness through freedom from passions, which render men slaves to the changeability and randomness of fickle Chance (Τύχη/*Fortuna*). My position is enhanced by Seneca's own claims on passions in the passage written above the former:

> *Non est emolliendus animus; si voluptati cessero, cedendum est dolori, cedendum est labori, cedendum est paupertati; idem sibi in me iuris esse volet et ambitio et ira; inter tot adfectus distrahar, immo discerpar.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 51.8-9.

Being a slave to fortune means being a slave to passions. *Fortuna* throws random circumstances and external stimuli at people, who often overestimate them and develop passions based on them blindly. No passion is innocent, however pleasurable it might be. Passions tend to trap the human agent, making one a puppet of their vehemence and impulsivity. The passions might be conflicting and many in number and forms (*voluptati…dolori…ambitio....ira*), but none is to be followed. The psychosynthesis of Medea and Phaedra is a fine example of conflicting passions ruling the intellect of their soul: love and anger in Medea's case, and love, shame and fear in Phaedra's case, as it will be shown later on. Theseus in Phaedra admits that it is not the gods who resisted him but his own pursuit of an indifferent that caused harm and interrupted the order of the universe:

> *Tuque semper, genitor, irae facilis assensor meae:*
> *morte facili dignus haud sum qui nova natum nece*
> *segregem sparsi per agros quique, dum falsum nefas*
> *exequor vindex severus, incidi in verum scelus.*
> *sidera et manes et undas scelere complevi meo.*

Seneca, *Phaedra* 1207-1211.

In his *De Ira* 1.20.1-4, Seneca condemns passions, and specifically anger, as they 'contribute nothing to the greatness of soul' (*aliquid iram ad magnitudinem animi conferre*, *De Ira* 1.20.1). He likens passions to swelling (*tumor*, *De Ira* 1.20.2) and the 'pestilent excess' (*pestilens abudantia*, *De Ira* 1.20.2) of the diseased body. Indeed, not much later, Seneca compares anger to a sick and oversensitive body which reacts to every touch:

> *Contra mihi videtur veternosi et infelicis animi, imbecillitatis sibi conscii, saepe indolescere, ut exulcerata et aegra corpore, quae ad tactus levissimos gemunt.*

Seneca, *De Ira* 1.20.3.

However, the spirit (*animi, De Ira* 1.20.3) is conscious (*conscii, De Ira* 1.20.3) of its weakness, which is an important point to further analyse since it renders Seneca's tragic examples ideal for educational purposes; Medea, for instance, is a tragic example to show the weakness of the mind under passion when even if she was aware of the cruelty and wrongness of her crimes, she could not stop herself. Furthermore, Seneca's tragic characters such as Hercules, Medea, Atreus, and Clytemnetstra, are the perfect examples of souls governed by passions; their grandiose resembles loftiness and sublimity, but this is far from the truth:

> *Omnes, quos vecors animus supra cogitationes extollit humanas, altum quiddam et sublime spirare se credunt; ceterum nil solidi subest, sed in ruinam prona sunt quae sine fundamentis crevere.*

Seneca, *De Ira* 1.20.2.

Anger is empty, without a solid foundation. It is based on external impressions, which Fortune stipulates, and, therefore, they change constantly. As a result, one cannot trust them. The one who allows oneself to be governed by unstable principles and get 'puffed up' by the vehemence of the passion is bound to fall; especially in case of anger, which is a completely unstable passion:

> *Non habet ira cui insistat. Non ex firmo mansuroque oritur, sed ventosa et inanis est tantumque abest a magnitudine animi, quantum a fortitudine audacia, a fiducia insolentia, ab austeritate tristitia, a severitate crudelitas. Multum, inquam, interest inter sublimem animum et superbum. Iracundia nihil amplum decorumque molitur;*
>
> Seneca, *De Ira* 1.20.2-3.

Seneca shows here that people often mix anger up with the greatness of the soul (*magnitudine animi, De Ira* 1.20.2-3). In the same way, they confuse foolhardiness, arrogance, sullenness and cruelty with bravery, confidence, austerity and sternness respectively. The confusion is evident in Seneca's tragic characters who depend on external things, evaluating them highly whereas they are *indifferentia*, with the result of sickening their mind. The confusion between anger and greatness of soul stems from the confusion over the value of *indifferentia*. If people knew the true value of things and what is virtuous and evil, they would not mistake passions for greatness. Therefore, there is a link between Seneca's *De Ira* and tragedies in that the characters show their cognitive mistakes, meaning the attribution of value to external indifferent things, and the repercussions of the above behaviour. Based on *De Ira* 1.20.1, Gottfried Mader calls 'rhetoric of irrationality' the phenomenon of Seneca's inverted world where the tragic characters demonstrate their *tumor* of their maddened soul instead of a *gratitudio animi*, and he describes it as an alternative version to sublime.[706] Maden supports the heroes' being overwhelmed by their passions, which they 'ponder, verbalise and rationalise', constructing a rhetorical identity as a result.[707] More importantly, the use of rhetorical devices indicates the confusion or misplacement of values and beliefs evident in the tragic characters. In the inverted world of Seneca, moral principles are deconstructed, and evil is

[706] Mader 2014, p. 575; On *Atreus* and the notion of Sublime see Schiesaro 2003, pp. 127f.; Torre 2007, pp. 52f. Mader thinks the words Stein-Hölkeskamp used for Trimalchio's dinner party appropriate for Seneca's inversed world: "Reversal of the usual becomes the usual, otherness becomes the norm, opposition to the original given becomes the principle." Stein-Hölkeskamp 2002, p. 7 in Mader 2014, p. 581, fn 14. See more in Mader 2014, pp. 586-589 and Mader 2003. On Medea as inverted *sapiens*, see Lefèvre 1997a, pp. 77f. and 2002, pp. 108f.; Mazzoli 1997b, p. 101. On Atreus and *nefas* as a spectacle, see more in Mader 2014, p. 582 and fn. 16; Anliker 1960, p. 59 (on Atreus and aesthetics; *Thyestes* 682-717); Liebermann 1974, pp. 73f; Lefèvre 1981, pp. 34f.; 1997b, pp. 68–70.

[707] Mader 2014, p. 576. Madder also supports (pp. 577-579) that the progression toward the tragic *scelus* indexes an assertion of selfhood and, eventually, leads towards self-realisation. However, I disagree with the outcome of a construction of the self and I maintain the opposite view that the passions rather cause a collapse of the self (see more in Chapter 4).

moralised and rationalised in contrast to the Stoic attribution of absolute value to *mens bona* (meaning the good mind, the right thinking), whereas everything else is *indifferentium*:[708]

> *Quis enim nescit nihil ex his, quae creduntur mala aut bona, ita videri sapienti ut omnibus? Non respicit, quid homines turpe iudicent aut miserum, non it qua populus, sed ut sidera contrarium mundo iter intendunt, ita hic adversus opinionem omnium vadit.*
>
> Seneca, *De Constantia* 14.4.[709]

The tragic characters could be called 'victims of Fortuna' if one looks at them closely; they depend their lives on the *indifferentia* on which they have no control; *Fortuna* both gives and takes them back (Seneca, *Epistles* 92.13).

Returning briefly to the passage 4.3 in *De Providentia,* it is important to stress that what is tested is one's strength of mind (*vim animi*, *De Providentia* 4.3), which is not consequential since bad morality is based on the poor choices and reasoning of the rational faculty in the soul (*anima*). If *anima* is not strong and makes rational errors, passions develop and emotional turmoil. The wise man will not be hurt by the injury (*De Costantia* 4.1) because he has built emotional resilience, whereas perceived injuries always pertain to emotional pain and suffering:

> *Adice nunc quod iniuriam nemo inmota mente accipit, sed ad sensum eius perturbatur, caret autem perturbatione vir ereptus erroribus, moderator sui, altae quietis et placidae. Nam si tangit illum iniuria, et movet et impellit,1 caret autem ira sapiens, quam excitat iniuriae species, nec aliter careret ira nisi et iniuria, quam scit sibi non posse fieri. Inde tam erectus laetusque est, inde continuo gaudio elatus;*
>
> Seneca, *De Constantia* 9.3.

Hence, the wise man experiences constant joy because he has achieved emotional maturity, enabling him to process triggers from the outer environment (*De Constantia* 8.3, 9.1). The wise man needs to analyse everything according to reason:

> *Ratio ergo arbitra est bonorum ac malorum; aliena et externa pro vilibus habet et ea, quae neque bona sunt neque mala, accessiones minimas ac levissimas iudicat. Omne enim illi bonum in animo est.*

[708] Mader 2014, p. 591. On *mens bona* and the indifferent, see also Seidensticker 1969, pp. 105-107; Lefèvre 1970, pp. 72–74; Mader 1982, 1993; 2000, pp. 164–166; Monteleone 1989, pp. 142–157; 1991, pp. 232–243; Moretti 1995, pp. 159–189. For an analysis of the rhetorical device and the meaning of the words in *Thyestes*, see Mader 2014, pp. 591-592.
[709] See also *SVF* 3.595.

Seneca, *Epistles* 66.35.

In *De Vita Beata*, Seneca points out the rational process of the external *indifferentia*:

> *Incorruptus vir sit externis et insuperabilis miratorque tantum sui, fidens animo atque in utrumque paratus, artifex vitae.*
>
> Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 8.3.

Hence, one should not resist fate and *fortuna* but be ready for every kind of fate by realising the externals' true value:

> *Externa ratio quaerat sensibus irritata et capiens inde principia—nec enim habet aliud, unde conetur aut unde ad verum impetum capiat—, at1 in se revertatur. Nam mundus quoque cuncta complectens rectorque universi deus in exteriora quidem tendit, sed tamen introrsum undique in se redit. Idem nostra mens faciat; cum secuta sensus suos per illos se ad externa porrexerit, et illorum et sui potens sit.*
>
> Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 8.4-5.

Seneca is clear that the mind needs to function similarly to the world and God, which are all identified and are active elements of the universe.[710] Emotional maturity can be achieved through rational analysis of the value of indifferents, good and evil (*Epistles* 66.36-38). Therefore, one should not be deceived by *Fortuna*:

> *Vincere tamen quam capi malo. Totum fortunae regnum despiciam, sed ex illo, si dabitur electio, meliora sumam. Quicquid ad me venerit, bonum fiet, sed malo faciliora ac iucundiora veniant et minus vexatura tractantem.*
>
> Seneca, *De Vita Beata* 25.5.

Fortuna cannot deceive one in reality because what she throws at people is indifferents from which they need to select the best and most agreeable rationally. It is a matter of choice (*De Providentia* 3.2; 3.2-3, 3.3-4, 10-11, 4.1-2, 4.10).

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[710] See Basore 1870, p. 119, n. a: 'In Stoic teaching the universe (*mundus*) was identified with deity—the active element of the universe, described by various names, which pervaded the vast mass of passive matter. According to the monistic theory of the older Stoics this was creative Fire. Acting upon itself, by a process of mutation it produced the other forms of matter, which in turn by the reverse process were resolved into primal Fire. The reference here is to some such integrity of the ruling principle.' See also Chapter 3 in the current thesis.

There is a paradoxical conjecture between the benevolent nature of providence and the fact that the tragedies bristle with evil, crimes and moral degradation. It seems impossible for the gods to allow *nefas* to exist.[711] The previous section of the current chapter indicated the connection of *Fortuna* to *Providentia* and *Fatum*, and most importantly to *indifferentia.* The above analysis offers the theoretical background of the plays as they are riddled with precepts on *Fortuna*, the insufficiency of one depending on her, and the importance of not regarding her gifts, *indifferentia*, as valuable in contradiction to the tragic characters' mistakes and coveting of *indifferentia* or *commoda.*

Seneca already connects poetry and his theory on chance and *indifferentia* in his *Epistles* where he quotes Publilius's lines on chance and its gifts*: referam, quo negat fortuita in nostro habenda* ('wherein he says that the gifts of Chance are not to be regarded as part of our possessions.' *Epistles* 8.9). People cannot control Fortuna's gifts as they are not theirs and therefore, they should not depend on those since what comes can easily be removed by Chance as shown in the three lines quated: *Alienum est omne, quicquid optando evenit* ('Still alien is whatever you have gained / By coveting.' *Epistles* 8.9); *Non est tuum, fortuna quod fecit tuum* ('What Chance has made yours is not really yours.' *Epistles* 8.10); *Dari bonum quod potuit, auferri potest* ('The good that could be given, can be removed.' *Epistles* 8.10). In Agamemnon, Strophius comments on the fleeting nature of happiness (*O nulla longi temporis felicitas! Agamemnon* 928) and Electra calls the gods fickle (*dubios deos*, *Agamemnon* 930).

Fischer points to two philosophical uses of *Fortuna* in Seneca's plays:[712] *Oedipus* and *Hercules Furens*. Oedipus is thinking of leaving everything, but Iocasta reminds him that a great king needs to take on adversities and that it is not manly to retreat before fortune (*Oedipus* 81-86). In *Hercules Furens*, Juno is not a goddess representing benevolent providence. Still, she symbolises *Fortuna,* displaying human passions such as jealousy, envy, and anger, which is the plot's driving force. Some scholars believe that Juno's portrayal follows her traditional literary description.[713] However, Juno is better interpreted as 'an allegorical figure of fortune' since her behaviour matches Seneca's philosophical belief that *Fortuna* is a challenge for men.[714]

In the tragedies, it is evident that characters suffer because of the changes Fortune brings; she sets an unstable place for them to structure their lives, and the fools abide by her wishes and attribute value to unstable externals, to the *indifferentia*. This is the reason they develop passions and, consequently, are led to wrong deeds. The chorus and the monologues in Seneca's tragedies often show the fall of the characters whose fortune changed,[715] especially those with royal power, as in *Agamemnon,* where there is a considerable connection between *regnum* and *fortuna*, a connection which is very frequent in Seneca:

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[711]The issue of existence of God is intertemporal, especially in Christianism where God is said to be Omnipotent, Omniscient, all-merciful and benevolent; it is impossible for evil to exist under these circumstances, but paradoxically evil exists; therefore, it becomes very difficult to prove there is god. Wildberger 2006 touches upon the issue of theodicy in Seneca and Stoicism in her third chapter 'Gott und Mensch', and she presents cosmos as a place of residence for both gods and men; the latter have a right and a duty to lead a rational life exactly as gods.

[712] Fischer 2014, pp. 761-762.

[713] Billerbeck 1999, pp. 33.

[714] Fischer 2014, p. 762 and 2008, pp. 84f; Novara 1987 and 1988.

[715] Fischer in Fischer 2014, p. 762 and n. 90, mentions as examples of choruses the odes 1 and 2 in *Hecules Furens*, the odes 2, 3 and 4 in *Phaedra*, the ode 1 in *Agamemnon*, and the odes 3 and 3 in *Thyestes*. He also mentions the monologue

O regnorumm
agnis fallax Fortuna bonis,
in praecipiti dubioque locas
excelsa nimis.
numquam placidam sceptra quietem
certumve sui tenuere diem;
alia ex aliis cura fatigat
vexatque animos nova tempestas.[716]

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 57-63.

Similarly, Oedipus deems kingship as an *indifferentium*, and a deceptive good sent by *Fortuna*:

Quisquamne regno gaudet? o fallax bonum,
quantum malorum fronte quam blanda tegis!
ut alta ventos semper excipiunt iuga
rupemque saxis vasta dirimentem freta
quamvis quieti verberant fluctus maris,
imperia sic excelsa Fortunae obiacent.

Seneca, *Oedipus* 6-11.

In the same vein, the Chorus in *Phaedra* talks about *Fortuna*'s adversities that fall especially on people with power:

Quanti casus, heu, magna rotant!
minor in parvis Fortuna furit
leviusque ferit leviora deus;

Seneca, *Phaedra* 1123-1125.

in *Oedipus* 1-81, the dispute between Agamemnon and Pyrrhus in *Troades* 203-359. As examples of the connection between reign and fortune, he mentions *Agamemnon* 57-59, and other royalties lamenting their fall as Hecuba in *Troades* 1-6 and Thyestes in *Thyestes* 446-470.

[716] For more tragic *exempla* of *Fortuna*, which are not further analysed in this chapter, see *Phaedra* 625-633; *Medea* 568-569, *Oedipus* 212, 674-675, 942-945, 1019, 1042-1046, 1059-1061; *Agamemnon* 37-38, 244-248, 419-420, 528-532, 693-694, 705-709.

Also, the Nurse in *Phaedra* points out that the mind's fault is responsible for suffering and ethical debasement, not the *indifferentia*: *mens impudicam facere, non casus, solet.* ('It is the mind that makes a woman unchaste, not what befalls her.' *Phaedra* 735), which is in total alignment with the Stoic notions of choice and mind's oscillation between passion and virtue based on false values (*De Providentia* 3.2; *Epistles* 8; *De Ira* 1.8.1-3, 2.4.2, 3.34.2).

In *Thyestes*, Atreus offers gifts of power to his brother under false pretences and conjures up *Fortuna*:

Atreus:
Quis influentis dona Fortunae abnuit?

Thyestes:
Expertus est quicumque quam facile effluant.

Seneca, *Thyestes* 536-537.

Thyestes knows, after he had abstained from luxuries and power, that *Fortuna*'s gifts are not worth risking or credible to make decisions based on them; they are 'snares' (*Insidiae sunt. Epistles* 8.3-4). The Chorus is in favour of the belief that one should not depend one's life and decisions on fickle *Fortuna*:

Nemo confidat nimium secundis,
nemo desperet meliora lassis:
miscet haec illis prohibetque Clotho
stare Fortunam, rotat omne fatum.
nemo tam divos habuit faventes,
crastinum ut posset sibi polliceri.
res deus nostras celeri citatas
turbine versat.

Seneca, *Thyestes* 615-622.

The Chorus conveys once again Seneca's view that one should not depend on *Fortuna* and that also *Fortuna* is identified with Fates and God (*De Beneficiis* 4.7.1-2; 4.8.3) as different names are used in the passage (*Clotho* 617; *Fortunam* 618; *fatum* 618; *divos … faventes* 619; *deus* 621). In *Medea*, the Chorus explains the whirlwind one gets into when trusting something as fickle and unstable as *Fortuna* and Chance: *res deus nostras celeri citatas / turbine versat.* ('God keeps our lives hastening, turning / in a speeding whirlwind.' *Thyestes* 621-622). The Chorus in *Medea*, also shows the chaos, the emotional and moral whirlpool, to which bad decisions and values lead:

Audax nimium qui freta primus
rate tam fragili perfida rupit,
terrasque suas post terga videns
animam levibus credidit auris,
dubioque secans aequora cursu
potuit tenui fidere ligno,
inter vitae mortisque vias
nimium gracili limite ducto.

Seneca, *Medea* 301-308.

The man who trusts the 'fickle breezes' of Fortuna, with a 'boat so fragile', meaning perhaps one's ill-reasoned mind, is led to the dangerous chaos of a whirlpool. A chance to prosperity is impossible when the mind is at sea (*Epistles* 35.4) and *Fortuna* leads the ship because she will throw it on the rocks (*In praecipitia cursus iste deducit … sed cernulat et allidit*. *Epistles* 8.3-4). In contrast, the wise man avoids the chaos of the 'whirl of heaven' by not believing in the majority's opinions on what is good and what is bad (*ut sidera contrarium mundo iter intendunt, ita hic adversus opinionem omnium vadit. De Constantia* 14.4). In *Agamemnon*, the Chorus emphasises *Fortuna*'s fleeting gift of the *indifferentium regnum*:

O regnorum
magnis fallax Fortuna bonis,
in praecipiti dubioque locas
excelsa nimis.
numquam placidam sceptra quietem
certumve sui tenuere diem;
alia ex aliis cura fatigat
vexatque animos nova tempestas.

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 57-63.

The Chorus also mentions the chaotic whirl Fortuna throws those who trust in *indifferentia,* such as *regnum* and power: *ut praecipites regum casus / Fortuna rotat.* ('as Fortune whirls the fates of kings in headlong movement.' *Agamemnon* 71-72). No one's good fortune is permanent as the same Chorus reminds the audience (*Licet arma vacent cessentque doli, / sidunt ipso pondere magna / ceditque oneri fortuna suo.* 'Though weapons sleep and treacheries cease, greatness sinks by its very weight, good fortune is a burden that crushes itself.' *Agamemnon* 87-89), as:

Quidquid in altum Fortuna tulit,
ruitura levat.

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 101-102.

After all, kings are in a worse position than the rest: *placet in vulnus maxima cervix* 'the loftiest neck is chosen for the ax.' *Agamemnon* 100). Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon* willingly leaves her own mind to Chance as if it was a boat inside *Fortuna*'s waves:

Maiora cruciant quam ut moras possim pati.
flammae medullas et cor exurunt meum;
mixtus dolori subdidit stimulos timor;
invidia pulsat pectus, hinc animum iugo
premit cupido turpis et vinci vetat;
et inter istas mentis obsessae faces
fessus quidem et devictus et pessumdatus
pudor rebellat. fluctibus variis agor,
ut, cum hinc profundum ventus, hinc aestus rapit,
incerta dubitat unda cui cedat malo.
proinde omisi regimen e manibus meis:
quocumque me ira, quo dolor, quo spes feret,
hoc ire pergam; fluctibus dedimus ratem.
ubi animus errat, optimum est casum sequi.

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 131-144.

Clytemnestra rejects (*Agamemnon* 131) the Stoic and Senecan method of delay (*Maximum remedium irae mora est.* 'The best corrective of anger lies in delay.' *De Ira* 2.29.1; *Dandum semper est tempus*. 'We should always allow some time.' *De Ira* 2.22.3). Similarly to Medea (*Ira, qua ducis, sequor*. 'Anger, where you lead, I follow.' *Medea* 953), who eagerly followed her anger, Clytemnestra is now overwhelmed by her welter of passions and is following Chance (*optimum est casum sequi*, *Agamemnon* 144). The Nurse is trying to bring her back to her senses, stressing Seneca's principle that one should not get blind by *Fortuna* or let oneself depend on her: *Caeca est temeritas quae petit casum ducem*. ('It is blind recklessness to look to chance as leader.' *Agamemnon* 145). However, it is already late and Clytemnestra defies the remark: *Cui ultima est fortuna, quid dubiam timet?* ('If one's fortune is desperate, why fear fortune's uncertainties?' *Agamemnon* 146). It is interesting that the Nurse, symbolising the Stoic rational reasoning, cannot change Clytemnestra's mind, who is aware of the fickle nature

of *Fortuna* but is too weak to change course now that she is already overwhelmed by passions. However, Clytemnestra defies Fortuna's unpredictable nature thinking that she cannot be in a worse position since Fortuna has used up all her resources (*Fortuna vires ipsa consumpsit suas. Agamemnon* 698). It would be crucial to keep in mind that both Medea and Clytemnestra chose passions when facing inner conflict (*fluctibus variis agor, Agamemnon* 138). The Nurse, although might be referring to Clytemnestra's sin, confirms that the fault is hidden since it is the choice of the mind what determines the course of events, not *Fortuna*: *Tuta est latetque culpa, si pateris, tua*. ('Your fault is safe and well hidden, if you let it be so.' *Agamemnon* 147). If read differently, the Nurse's phrase could direct to Clytemnestra's persona responsibility for not taking care of her judgments and passions of jealousy, lust and thirst for power.

Seneca continues parallelising *Fortuna*'s chaos with a whirlpool, having Eurybates describe the storm where both Trojans and Danaans found themselves and blaming the gods (*Agamemnon* 421-578). The fickle nature of fate is emphasised: *quid fata possunt!* ('The strange outcomes of fate!' *Agamemnon* 512). It seems that *fatum* and the gods do not follow a noble and fair plan; they just attack with their judgment being clouded:

"Nil nobile ausos pontus atque undae ferent?
ignava fortes fata consument viros?
perdenda mors est? quisquis es, nondum malis
satiate tantis, caelitum, tandem tuum
numen serena."

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 517-521.

The soldiers beg and wonder about the cause of their disasters, but in the end, the voices are drawn because of the waves: *nec plura possunt: occupat vocem mare.* ('They could speak no more: the sea cut off their words.' *Agamemnon* 527). Fortuna's nature seems cruel in man's eyes. However, the Chorus in *Oedipus*[717] shows the audience that, although preferable, man is not in charge of fate:

Fata si liceat mihi
fingere arbitrio meo,
temperem Zephyro levi
vela, ne pressae gravi
spiritu antennae tremant.
lenis et modice fluens
aura nec vergens latus
ducat intrepidam ratem;

[717] See also Sklenár 2007, pp.183–194.

Seneca, *Oedipus* 888-889.

If it were on the man to make decisions, their mind would be as an 'untroubled boat' that would guide them in the company of a 'gentle breeze' (*Oedipus* 887-889). However, despite past attempts such as Icarus' and Daedalus' (*Oedipus* 892-908), man cannot control *Fortuna*'s sea: *quidquid excessit modum / pendet instabili loco.* ('All that strays from the mean is poised in an unsteady place.' *Oedipous* 909-910). Hence, Chorus believes caution and a balanced life are necessary: *tuta me media vehat / vita decurrens via*. ('Running a middle course, my life would carry me safe.' *Oedipus* 890-891). One should avoid excessive passions and courses in life.

Another example of an external without moral value would be beauty: *ut scire possemus non deformitate corporis foedari animum, sed pulchritudine animi corpus ornari.* ('that we might be enabled to understand that the soul is not disfigured by the ugliness of the body, but rather the opposite, that the body is beautified by the comeliness of the soul.' *Epistles* 66.4). The chorus in *Phaedra* explains the neutral value of the *indifferentium* of beauty and its changeable nature: *Res est forma fugax: quis sapiens bono / confidat fragili? dum licet, utere.* ('Beauty is fugitive: can a wise man trust / so fragile a boon? Use it while you may.' *Phaedra* 773-774). Beauty belongs to the realm of *Fortuna* who is viewed as evil for stealing it away:

> *Raris forma viris (saecula perspice)*
> *impunita fuit. te melior deus*
> *tutum praetereat, formaque nobilis*
> *deformis senii monstret imaginem.*

Seneca, *Phaedra* 820-823.

The messenger in *Phaedra* also blames beauty for Hipollytus' dismemberment and loss of his limps, viewed as punishment sent by *Fortuna*; when delivering the tragic news, he ponders on the cause of the tragedy: *hocine est formae decus?* ('Is this the glory of his beauty?' *Phaedra* 1110).

There is a contradiction between the benevolent divine providence and the evil that Fortune brings. Seneca addresses the issue himself: *Quaesisti a me, Lucili, quid ita, si providentia mundus regeretur, multa bonis viris mala accideren*t ('You have asked me, Lucilius, why, if a Providence rules the world, it still happens that many evils befall good men.' *De Providentia* 1.1). Fischer argues that the chorus in *Phaedra* concludes that Fortune now rules the world and human affairs blindly, coming into opposition with providence, which rules the cosmos:[718] *Res humanas ordine nullo* | *Fortuna regit* | *sparsitque manu munera caeca* | *peiora fovens* ('Human

[718] Fischer 2014, p. 763.

affairs with no semblance of order are ruled by Fortune. She scatters her gifts blindly, promoting all that is worst.' *Phaedra* 978-980). The cosmos, though, is ruled by orderly movements of the stars and laws.[719]

The tragic heroes try to change their fate[720] whereas they are supposed to follow it willingly; Seneca maintains that obeying god is freedom (*deo parere libertas est, De Vita Beata* 15.7) and that philosophy teaches us how to obey and follow god willingly even if fate does not change (*Haec* [*philosophia*] *adhortabitur ut deo libenter pareamus, ut fortunae contumaciter; haec docebit ut deum sequaris, feras casum. Epistles* 16.5). Fischer[721] makes an important observation, though, that is the phrase 'following god' does not mean 'obeying god' (*parere deo*), but 'agreeing with god' (*adsentiri*, *Epistles* 96.2). Seneca quotes and translates Cleanthes's prayer after the example of Cicero (*SVF* 1.527), and he exalts the known Stoic *sententia*: *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*. ('Aye, the willing soul Fate leads, but the unwilling drags along.' *Epistles* 107.11). Therefore, *libertas* (freedom) for Seneca is the achievement of being free of the relentless changeable *Fortuna*[722] and accepting one's fate. One needs to equate the random circumstances of *Fortuna* and not be passively subjected to it or accept the passions which originate from her uncritically, but change one's attitude towards her:

> *Libertas proposita est; ad hoc praemium laboratur. Quae sit libertas, quaeris? Nulli rei servire, nulli necessitati, nullis casibus, fortunam in aequum deducere.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistle* 51.9.

In many plays, Seneca presents man's defective view of Fortuna as they try to change it or fear it, presenting their mistake as explained in *Epistles* 51.9 and elsewhere. In *Hercules Furens*, for instance,

> *Novit paucos secura quies,*
> *qui velocis memores aevi*
> *tempora numquam reditura tenent.*
> *dum fata sinunt, vivite laeti.*
> *properat cursu vita citato,*
> *volucrique die*
> *rota praecipitis vertitur anni;*
> *durae peragunt pensa sorores*
> *nec sua retro fila revolvunt.*

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[719] Schmitz 1993, p. 158.
[720] On fate (Stoic *fatum*), see Bobzien 1998a; Fischer 2008, pp. 179f. and 2014, p. 764 (including this footnote); Wildberger 2006, pp. 42f.; Frede 2003; Algra 1999;
[721] Fischer 2014, p. 764.
[722] On the concept of *libertas* and free will (which has been a great point of discussion in Stoicism), see Inwood 2005, p. 306; Griffin 1976, pp. 383f. Also, on freedom, death and suicide as a road to freedom (except for some cases) in Stoicism, see Inwood 2005a, pp. 302f; Rist 1969, pp. 233-255; pp. 259-281.

at gens hominum fertur rapidis
obvia fatis incerta sui;
Stygias ultro quaerimus undas.
nimium, Alcide, pectore forti
properas maestos visere manes.
certo veniunt tempore Parcae.
nulli iusso cessare licet,
nulli scriptum proferre diem;

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 175-190.

Men try to control *Fortuna* instead of trusting it because of the uncertainty they feel: *at gens hominum fertur rapidis / obvia fatis incerta sui, Hercules Furens* 183-184). They also talk about Styx, the Fates and the need to change one's fate both in the above passage (*durae peragunt pensa sorores / nec sua retro fila revolvunt. Hercules Furens* 181-182; *Stygias ultro quaerimus undas, Hercules Furens* 185;) and later on: *Evincas utinam iura ferae Stygis / Parcarumque colos non revocabiles!* ('May you vanquish the laws of cruel Styx, and the irrevocable distaffs of the Fates.' *Hercules Furens* 558-559). However, the chorus conveys a Stoic maxim (Seneca, *Epistles* 24; 4.9; 101) once more:

quid iuvat durum properare fatum?
omnis haec magnis vaga turba terris
ibit ad manes facietque inerti
vela Cocyto. tibi crescit omne,
et quod occasus videt et quod ortus:
parce venturis; tibi, Mors, paramur.
sis licet segnis, properamus ipsi;
prima quae vitam dedit hora, carpit.

Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 867-874.

Indeed, Seneca, in his *Epistles*, refutes fear of death: *Quid te ipse decipis et hoc nunc primum, quod olim patiebaris, intellegis?* ('Why do you voluntarily deceive yourself and require to be told now for the first time what fate it is that you have long been labouring under?' *Epistles* 4.9). Fear of death is a curse which prevents man from living: *miserrimus ac miserrima omnia efficiens metus mortis* ('and the fear of death, a curse which lays a curse upon everything else.' *Epistles* 101.10). Hence, people should open their eyes and stop deceiving themselves pretending they are defenceless in front of the power of divine *Fortuna*. The Chorus in *Agamemnon*, once again conveys Seneca's Stoic view of death:

Solus servitium perrumpet omne
contemptor levium deorum,
qui vultus Acherontis atri,
qui Styga tristem non tristis videt
audetque vitae ponere finem:
par ille regi, par superis erit.
o quam miserum est nescire mori!

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 604-610.

The Chorus confirms that the solution to man's misfortunes is freedom from passions and especially fear of death. To scorn the fickle gods (*levium deorum, Agamemnon* 604-605) is not hubris but independence of *indifferentia*, things with no intrinsic value, such as death. It means that men have control of their minds and are not dependent on *Fortuna*. Death is not to be feared, but instead, it is freedom (*Miseros libera mors vocet.* 'Death's freedom beckons the wretched.' *Agamemnon* 591); it is a state of calmness where 'raging' *Fortuna* cannot reach them:

Portus aeterna placidus quiete.
nullus hunc terror nec impotentis
procella Fortunae movet aut iniqui
flamma Tonantis.

Seneca, *Agamemnon* 592-595.

The Messenger in Oedipus conveys the same message: *'anime, quid mortem times? / mors innocentem sola Fortunae eripit.'* ("'My spirit, why fear death? Death alone can rescue the innocent from Fortune.'" *Oedipus* 933-934). The Chorus in *Oedipus* also clearly states the Stoic principle that man should yield to fate:

Fatis agimur: cedite fatis.
non sollicitae possunt curae
mutare rati stamina fusi.
quidquid patimur mortale genus,
quidquid facimus venit ex alto,
servatque suae decreta colus
Lachesis dura revoluta manu.
omnia secto tramite vadunt,
primusque dies dedit extremum.
non illa deo vertisse licet,

990quae nexa suis currunt causis.
it cuique ratus
prece non ulla mobilis ordo.
multis ipsum metuisse nocet,
multi ad fatum venere suum
dum fata timent.

Seneca, *Oedipus* 980-994.

The Chorus's passage states main Stoic and Senecan principles such as that man should follow nature since only fate and Chance (*Lachesis, Oedipus* 986) have woven a series of causes (*quae nexa suis currunt causis, Oedipus* 990), which not even gods, as men imagine them, can influence. Indeed, Seneca interrelates the notions of *Natura, Fortuna*, Chance, God and Fate:

"Natura," inquit, "haec mihi praestat." Non intellegis te, cum hoc dicis, mutare nomen deo? Quid enim aliud est natura quam deus et divina ratio toti mundo partibusque eius inserta?

Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 4.7.1.

Seneca explains that any name one chooses for God, Jupiter, Thunderer or Stayer, (*Iovem illum Optimum ac Maximum…Tonantem et Statorem*, *De Beneficiis* 4.7.1) or even Fate is appropriate, and he explains *Fatum*:

Hunc eundem et Fatum si dixeris, non mentieris; nam cum fatum nihil aliud sit, quam series implexa causarum, ille est prima omnium causa, ex qua ceterae pendent.

Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 4.7.2.

Seneca mentions that *fatum* is a series of causes, reminding the Stoic and especially Chrysippean notion of εἱμαρμένη (Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 7.2). Hence, the Chorus in *Oedipus* accepts the Stoic principles that man is not responsible for what happens in the world. However, they are responsible for their interpretation of externals. The Chorus confirms that men bring misfortune upon themselves when they excessively fear Fate (*Oedipus* 992-994), which is one of the core things Seneca wants to amend and correct in his readers. Davis also argues that the Chorus is concerned with Fate,[723] which determines the tragic world presented by Seneca, where crimes against nature are punished by 'reversals in the natural order'.[724] However, Davis does not preclude Oedipus' guilt and

[723] Davis 1991, pp. 150-151.
[724] Davis 1991, p. 161.

responsibility,[725] attributing it not to a deliberate intention to commit a crime but to Oedipus' 'hereditary taint', inviting the reader to redefine the notion of guilt.[726] However, I argue that there is another explanation for Oedipus's guilt, which does not require a redefinition of terms and it also aligns with Seneca's theoretical principles which are evident in *Oedipus* and, more specifically, in the Chorus's odes. Oedipus cannot be guilty because of Fate's plans, since he could not control them. His guilt pertains to his fear of fate and his persistent attempt to avoid his fate, as Oedipus confirms (*Oedipus* 12; 22) and as Davis remarks.[727] Oedipus' fate came upn him through his fear of fate as the Chorus points out: *multis ipsum metuisse nocet, / multi ad fatum venere suum / dum fata timent. (Oedipus* 992-994).

Furthermore, there is a personal responsibility for how to interpret and value what *Fortuna* brings. It is man's choice whether they follow or resist their fate, and it is one's choice to hide behind the false virtues that deceive one's eyes:

> *Nos in lucem, propter quae pugnaremus, extulimus; nos et causas periculorum nostrorum et instrumenta disiecto terrarum pondere eruimus; nos fortunae mala nostra tradidimus nec erubescimus summa apud nos haberi, quae fuerant ima terrarum. Vis scire, quam falsus oculos tuos deceperit fulgor?*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 94.57-58.

Hence, there is an urgent need to reveal the false pretences playing out in front of one's eyes as seen in the third chapter and explore our own responsibility which lies in our soul and power of choice. Seneca, in his own tragedies, suggests the solution, which is to trust *Natura* in whichever form and name she might have, whether it is *Fatum*, *Providentia* or *Fortuna*:

> *Sed fata credas desse: sic atram Styga*
> *iam petimus ultro. caelibem vitam probet*
> *sterilis iuventus: hoc erit, quidquid vides,*
> *unius aevi turba et in semet ruet.*
> *proinde vitae sequere naturam ducem:*
> *urbem frequenta, civium coetus cole.*
>
> Seneca, *Phaedra* 477-482.

The Nurse conveys the Stoic principle of following Nature. Seneca mentions that one should follow Nature, otherwise, Nature will drag them and adversities and vice occur, and he quotes a verse by Cleanthes (Cleanthes,

[725] Davis 1991, p. 156.
[726] Davis 1991, pp. 161-163.
[727] Davis 1991, pp. 155, 161.

Frag. 527 von Arnim; Epictetus, *Ench.* 53), translated into Latin: *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.* (Aye, the willing soul Fate leads, but the unwilling drags along.' *Epistles* 107.11.5). The phrase stands out in Seneca's *Phaedra*, uttered by Theseus:

> *O nimium potens*
> *quanto parentes sanguinis vinclo tenes*
> *Natura! quam te colimus inviti quoque!*
>
> Seneca, *Phaedra* 1114-1116.

Unfortunately, Phaedra shows her dependence on the divine element and her anguish:

> *Regni tenacis dominus et tacitae Stygis*
> *nullam relictos fecit ad superos viam:*
> *thalami remittet ille raptorem sui?*
> *nisi forte amori placidus et Pluton sedet.*
>
> Seneca, *Phaedra* 625-628.

Hippolytus confirms Phaedra's dependence on the gods: *Illum quidem aequi caelites reducem dabunt.* ('His return will be granted by the just deities.' *Phaedra* 629).

Passions and the Tragedies as Conduits for Promulgating Stoic Ideas

The previous section of the current chapter underscored the dependence of humans on their bad perception of *Fortuna*, which is responsible for what men regard as misfortunes. These, in reality, are things of no intrinsic value called *indifferentia*. They might prove advantageous, but they are not necessary to one's moral development. However, people improperly value them as beneficial and necessary to their happiness. Therefore, in view of their acquisition or their loss, they develop passions, which are based on their false beliefs and set of judgements, and ultimately lead to irrational and irreversible actions.

In this section, the sketch of Senecan tragic characters' psychological portraiture will show that they led to insanity and rage because of their flawed reasoning and dependence on *indifferentia*, whether loved ones, power or perceived insults, wealth, beauty, among others. In his *Epistles*, Seneca discourages the interlocutor from caring for luxuries and wealth, and he prompts him not to be afraid of poverty since it will prove beneficial; wealth does not bring happiness; on the contrary, the struggle to have it robs humans from happiness and peace of mind since he might attract fake friends, whereas poverty will show the real ones (*Epistles* 20.7-8). Furthermore, Seneca incites the reader to manage his thoughts and values accordingly: *Huc*

ergo cogitationes tuae tendant, hoc cura, hoc opta, omnia alia vota deo remissurus, ut contentus sis temet ipso et ex te nascentibus bonis. Quae potest esse felicitas propior? ('Accordingly, let your thoughts, your efforts, your desires, help to make you content with your own self and with the goods that spring from yourself; and commit all your other prayers to God's keeping! What happiness could come closer home to you?' *Epistles* 20.8). Seneca thinks that the most important worry an individual should have is the moral improvement of oneself self and the goods that come out of it. Therefore, one should be concerned only about how to be virtuous; all the rest lies within God's responsibility:

> *Unum ergo bonum ipsa virtus est, quae inter hanc fortunam et illam superba incedit cum magno utriusque contemptu.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 76.21.

What fortune brings is not necessarily virtuous. Seneca refers to Nature, Fate, Providence, or Fortune, as shown in the previous section. *Indifferentia*, either *commoda* or not, are beyond human grasp, and when they are, they are likely to be gone; it all depends on *fatum* and *fortuna*. Should man depend his happiness on something as fickle as an *indifferens*, he would set himself up for disappointment, emotional turbulence and moral degradation. However, men should be consistent with themselves, and careful that their words and actions are compatible; there needs to be harmony between one's inner life and their activities (*facere docet philosophia, non dicere, et hoc exigit, ut ad legem suam quisque vivat, ne orationi vita dissentiat, ut ipsa intra se vita unius sit omnium actionum sine dissensione coloris*. *Epistles* 20.2). Therefore, one should think as they act: *Maximum hoc est et officium sapientiae et indicium, ut verbis opera concordent, ut ipse ubique par sibi idemque sit.* ('This, I say, is the highest duty and the highest proof of wisdom,—that deed and word should be in accord, that a man should be equal to himself under all conditions, and always the same.' *Epistles* 20.2). Seneca stresses that oneself needs to always be the same so that one achieves wisdom. If his judgment is fickle and continually changes, the individual will not be able to maintain peace of mind and balance:

> *Vitium est haec diversitas et signum vacillantis animi ac nondum habentis tenorem suum. Etiamnunc dicam, unde sit ista inconstantia et dissimilitudo rerum consiliorumque: nemo proponit sibi, quid velit, nec si proposuit, perseverat in eo, sed transilit; nec tantum mutat, sed redit et in ea, quae deseruit ac damnavit, revolvitur.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 20.3-5.

The root of unhappiness is constant change and inconsistency between action and purpose. A man does not know what he wants and, even when he does, changes his mind and desires what he had previously renounced. Such behaviour indicates an imbalanced and unreliable mind (*vacillantis animi, Epistles* 20.3-5) that swings from one passion to another, not taking into consideration that the unsteady force of Fortuna controls the

objects of his desire:

> *Nesciunt ergo homines, quid velint, nisi illo momento, quo volunt; in totum nulli velle aut nolle decretum est. Variatur cotidie iudicium et in contrarium vertitur ac plerisque agitur vita per lusum. Preme ergo quod coepisti, et fortasse perduceris aut ad summum aut eo, quod summum nondum esse solus intellegas.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 20.7.

The constant change of one's judgment (*iudicium, Epistles* 20.7) indicates a lack of solid values and beliefs or values that are wrongly established. Such reasoning leaves man unprotected and vulnerable, thinking of his life as a game, which is bound to lose since only Fortuna can control the game's tokens, meaning the *indifferentia.* On the contrary, one needs to pursue and maintain wisdom, which is to be consistent in one's values and judgement: *Quid est sapientia? Semper idem velle atque idem nolle.* ('What is wisdom? Always desiring the same things, and always refusing the same things.' *Epistles* 20.5). One's mind, self, and choices are the only things they can control and improve: *Profice et ante omnia hoc cura, ut constes tibi.* ('Make progress, and, before all else, endeavour to be consistent with yourself.' *Epistles* 35.4). Consistency comes in contradiction with constant change, and only the wise man and people who try to progress can comprehend the idea:

> *Mutatio voluntatis indicat animum natare, aliubi atque aliubi apparere, prout tulit ventus. Non vagatur, quod fixum atque fundatum est. Istud sapienti perfecto contingit, aliquatenus et proficienti provectoque.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 35.4.

Furthermore, there are some confusing instances that seemingly only support the latter distinction, which is of more pivotal importance in this chapter, regarding the existence of completely non-rational parts in the soul. In his *De Ira*, Seneca again makes use of vocabulary which resembles Plato's charioteer myth in the Phaedrus since he talks about ruling passions which hold the reins (*De Ira* 1.7.2-4) and about the need for the anger to be tamed by reason and not act on its own accord (*De Ira* 1.9.2-4; 18.1-2). However, as Gretchen Reydams-Schils shows, regardless of the language he uses, Seneca speaks in terms of Stoic moral psychology.[728] Seneca refers to the excessive impulses which are triggered by the mistaken assent to reason; at that point, the impulse cannot easily cease (*De Ira* 1.7.4) and takes control of the human agent. This, however, is indeed a crucial component in mainstream Stoic philosophy since Chrysippus used the example

[728] Reydams-Schils 2023, pp. 60-64.

of the runner who cannot stop or control his speed due to his much-increased impetus (LS 65J, K; 65A). Therefore, in a similar fashion, Seneca also uses the example of a body that has been thrown down from a cliff and cannot stop because of the downward movement (*De Ira* 1.7.4). In summary, Seneca's use of Platonic language by no means undermines generally accepted Stoic commitments.

Thus, there is a concrete danger for the mind to become the passion itself by misjudging and erring. It is because of the mind's mistake that it cannot go back to proper functioning,[729] which means according to Nature, hence right Reason. Seneca is clear on why this mechanism takes place; the mind is neither set in pieces, fragmented (*sepositus, De Ira* 1.8.2), nor does it watch the passions operate from the outside (*extrinsecus, De Ira* 1.8.2). On the contrary, the mind is itself transformed into the passion and since the passion and the reason both form a kind of change of the mind towards worse or better (*De Ira* 1.8.2-3), the former being vice and bad reason, whereas the latter being virtue and right reason. The mind swings between these two dispositions, and hence, if it makes a mistake, which is cognitive, it will turn into passion and vice. The risk of the affective transformation, which is an implication of his psychological monism, is why Seneca rejects the Aristotelian moderation and the supposed benefit of experiencing anger.[730] This error is what is being displayed throughout the tragedies, and it is the main culprit ofthe catastrophes taking place, a fact that is very well tailored to the Stoic ethical principle that there is only moral evil, which takes place within man's mind.

The following section analyses certain passions in Seneca's tragic characters, such as anger, fear, pity, and love. The examination of the passions will indicate a Stoic reading of the plays, since the behaviour of the characters is a manifestation and the implementation of the Stoic action theory, which is based on the mistaken *iudicio* and the development of passions which lead to –usually catastrophic- deeds. The mistaken values attributed to *indifferentia* by the characters create passions; the following examination shows that the theory above, evident in numerous places in Seneca's philosophical body, is unfolding in the behaviour of the heroes, which is also a process, as a passion is. The analysis will show that tragedies are vehicles of the Chrysippean and Senecan view below:

> *Volo tibi Chrysippi quoque distinctionem indicare. Ait sapientem nulla re egere, et tamen multis illi rebus opus esse. "Contra stulto nulla re opus est, nulla enim re uti scit, sed omnibus eget." Sapienti et manibus et oculis et multis ad cotidianum usum necessariis opus est, eget nulla re. Egere enim necessitatis est, nihil necesse sapienti est. Ergo quamvis se ipso contentus sit, amicis illi opus est. Hos cupit habere quam plurimos, non ut beate vivat; vivet enim etiam sine amicis beate. Summum bonum extrinsecus instrumenta non quaerit. Domi colitur, ex se totum est. Incipit fortunae esse subiectum, si quam partem sui foris quaerit.*

[729] Reydams-Schils 2023, p. 62.
[730] Reydams-Schils 2023, p. 62.

Seneca's tragic characters are examples of a Stoic fool who 'does not understand how to use anything, but he is in want of everything' (*Contra stulto nulla re opus est, nulla enim re uti scit, sed omnibus eget, Epistles* 9.14) and, hence, loses their self-control and virtue which one can find within their self. However, the Stoic fool, like the tragic heroes, desires or avoids things 'from without' (*si quam partem sui foris quaerit, Epistles* 9.15), which only *Fortuna* can control, and therefore, becomes 'subject to the play of Fortuna' (*Incipit fortunae esse subiectum, Epistles* 9.15). This flawed reasoning will be shown in the plays themselves in the following analysis. Seneca has often been accused of superficial knowledge of the Stoic doctrine and of offering mere moralising to a broader audience without making good use of the Stoic technical terms. However, Stoic moral psychology, with a specific focus on human action, is widely evident throughout the whole body of Seneca's works, including both his prose and his tragedy. I aim to offer a renewed defence of the tragedies as effective conduits for promulgating Stoic ideas to the audience.

Anger

Anger is the most deplorable passion in Seneca, since it is the main culprit of terrible disasters. In the same fashion as Stoics, Seneca, in exploring the causes of anger, observes that people deem trivial matters important (*exigua magno aestimatis, De Ira* 3.34.2). People assign importance to things which are arbitrary or beyond their control. In his *De Ira,* Seneca says that anger develops when one assents to the false judgment that one has been harmed (therefore that something bad is present) and that it is appropriate to take revenge.[731]

In the second act of Medea, the passion of anger is unfolding. All the more, before it is fully exposed, the nurse functions as the pause of which both Seneca and Epictetus spoke since she prompts Medea to stop her crazy passion (*Medea* 157) and hold back her words and bridle herheart (*Medea* 174-5) as there is danger in the path of passions. This is what a wise or rational person would do; they would wait and hold off their answer to an impression in view of an external stimulus (*De Ira* 2.29, 3.10.1–2; Epict. *Encheiridion* 1, 20; Epict. *Diss*. 1.20, 26; 2.8, 18; 3.12). However, Medea is not to act in such manner, and she is to give her assent to the evaluative statement that she has been wronged as follows below. Already in act two, she has shown that she is contemplating the events in a deleterious and dangerous way;

Occidimus: aures pepulit hymenaeus
meas.vix ipsa tantum, vix adhuc
credo malum. hoc facere Iason
potuit, erepto patre patria atque

[731] For a more detailed syllogism which fuels the passion of anger, see Chapter 1; also see Graver 2007.

regno sedibus solam exteris deserere
durus?

Seneca, *Medea* 116-120.

And a bit later, she adds:

Culpa est Creontis tota, qui sceptro
impotensconiugia solvit, quique
genetricem abstrahit natis, et arto
pignore astrictam fidem dirimit:
petatur solus, hic poenas luat,
quas debet. alto cinere cumulabo
domum;videbit atrum verticem
flammis agi
Malea longas navibus flectens moras.

Seneca, *Medea* 143-149.

Medea receives the external stimulus – the wedding hymn- which she interprets as something harmful to her, and then, she tries to find the culprit who wronged her. Therefore, once she hears the hymn, she starts forming an ill syllogism; Her ingrained belief is that the betrayal of her bond with Jason is something wrong and harmful, which the wedding hymn symbolises and functions as a trigger, meaning it presages something wrong- Jason's wedding to Creusa, against which Medea needs protection. She also thinks that the person responsible for the wedding and the disastrous consequences is Creon. Therefore, it is Creon who wronged her, and it is now appropriate to take revenge by hurting him. It is evident that she has already let *Fortuna*'s indifferent wedding have an impact on her as the Stoic fool does (*Epistles* 9.14-15).

Medea is being triggered by the impression of the wedding hymn, which translates into the judgment that something evil is taking place and that it is harmful to her. According to the threefold development of passions (*De Ira*, 2.4.2), she gives her assent (*adsensus*, *De Ira* 2.4.2) to the propositional content of the impression (the judgment, *iudicium*, *De Ira* 2.4.2), and she also feels that her upcoming revenge is appropriate:

Nobis placet nihil illam per se audere sed animo adprobante; nam speciem capere acceptae iniuriae et ultionem eius concupiscere et utrumque coniungere, nec laedi se debuisse et vindicari debere, non est eius impetus, qui sine voluntate nostra concitatur. Ille simplex est, hic compositus et plura continens;

intellexit aliquid, indignatus est, damnavit, ulciscitur: haec non possunt fieri, nisi animus eis quibus tangebatur adsensus est.

Seneca, *De Ira* 2.1.4-5.

The passion of anger has already been formed within Medea, whose mind already experienced wedding hymn and Jason's actions as a perceived injury, which is the trigger for anger: *Iram quin species oblata iniuriae moveat non est dubium* ('There can be no doubt that anger is aroused by the direct impression of an injury.' *De Ira*, 2.1.3). From that point onwards, Medea's anger has risen with the notion that she is entitled to feel wronged and to seek revenge, leading her to action: *intellexit aliquid, indignatus est, damnavit, ulciscitur* ('The mind has grasped something, has become indignant, has condemned the act, and now tries to avenge it.' *De Ira* 2.1.5).

During Medea's reasoning, there is a point which might cause wonder and confusion. She blames Creon for her suffering, although in the start, she is contemplating revenge against Jason (*Medea* 118-126). Later, she experiences a change of heart, at least for the first part of the story:

Quid tamen Iason potuit, alieni
arbitrî iurisque factus? debuit
ferro obvium offerre pectus—
melius, a melius, dolorfuriose,
loquere. si potest, vivat meus, ut
fuit, Iason; si minus, vivat
tamen, memorque nostri muneri
parcat meo.

Seneca, *Medea* 137-142.

Here, Medea tries to rationalise the situation and attempts to present Jason as innocent because he was forced by Creon's authority to act accordingly. However, it is a passion again which prompts her course of thought: love. Perhaps this is the passion from which the catastrophe starts since, no matter the positive and affectionate aspects of love, it is still a passion which is based on a false placement of value, meaning the thought of a person (an external to the agent) as good and therefore the feeling of attraction towards them. Medea admits that love made her resort to heinous crimes (*Medea* 130-134), although it is implied that anger will impel her to exceed herself andher killing spree, and do worse:

funestum impie

quam saepe fudi sanguinem—et nullum
scelusirata feci: saevit infelix amor.

Seneca, *Medea* 134-36.

In the same vein, Medea exclaims *totiens nocens sum facta, sed numquam mihi* ('I have done so much harm, but never for myself.' *Medea* 280),[732] meaning that she committed her crimes not for her own benefit but for Jason, out of inarticulate love and blind anger (*PHP* 4.6.43–6, 4.6.9, 19). The result is again the same; due to passions reason is rejected (*PHP* 4.2.10–12, 17, 27).[733] Not only anger but also love is a passion and leads to irrational actions:

Ita animus si in iram, amorem aliosque se proiecit adfectus, non permittitur reprimere impetum; rapiat illum oportet et ad imum agat pondus suum et vitiorum natura proclivis.

Seneca, *De Ira* 1.7.4.

Later on, Medea's love is transformed into anger and hate through the procession of ill judgments to which she gives her assent. Passions are not to be trusted; they are constantly changeable and beyond control after they have taken control. The inherent mutability and instability of passions are bound to lead the agent towards destruction.[734] It is evident in Seneca that passions can shift from one to another, but even if the transition seems peaceful, it does not come out of good reasoning: *Non rationis tunc beneficio quievit, sed affectuum infida et mala pace.* ('Then there is peace, not wrought through the good offices of reason, but through a treacherous and evil agreement between the passions.' *De Ira* 1.8.7). Seneca, also talks about the transition from fear into hope: *Quemadmodum eadem catena et custodiam et militem copulat, sic ista, quae tam dissimilia sunt, pariter incedunt; spem metus sequitur.* ('Just as the same chain fastens the prisoner and the soldier who guards him, so hope and fear, dissimilar as they are, keep step together; fear follows hope.' *Epistles* 5.7-8.). However, fear of avoiding *indifferentia* and hope to acquire *indifferentia*, Fortuna's goods and adversities, is a source of torture (*Epistles* 5.8). Similarly, Medea is torturing herself in fearing and distressing over the past and hoping for a change of Jason's heart (*Medea* 137-142).

[732] Wilson 2010's translation (2010) would be better suited here to Fitch 2018 'I incurred guilt so often, but never for myself'.
[733] See also Tieleman 2003, pp. 170–187; Gill 2005 on the usage of poetic examples by Stoics.
[734] On changeability of passions, see more in Plutarch. *Mor*. 446F–447A (= LS 65 G). [The Stoics] say that passion is no different from reason, and that there is no dissension and conflict between the two, but a turning of the single reason in both directions, which we do not notice owing to the sharpness and speed of the change. We do not perceive that the natural instrument of appetite and regret, or anger and fear, is the same part of the psyche, which is moved by pleasure towards wrong, and while moving recovers itself. For appetite and anger and fear and all such things are corrupt opinions and judgements, which do not arise around just one part of the psyche but are the inclinations, yieldings, assents and impulses of the whole control-centre, and are, quite generally, activities which change rapidly, just like children's fights, whose fury and intensity are volatile owing to their weakness. (Trans. By Gill 2006).

The passions, which in Seneca are processes governed by individual logic and volition (*De Ira* 2.4.1; 2.1.3-5; 2.3.1-5), are manifested both as physical symptoms (*De Ira* 1.1.3-7; 2.35.3-6; 3.4.1-3) and utterances (*De Ira* 2.35.5; 3.4.2). Seneca's tragic heroes give voice to their affections and passions in a way which resembles the latter as analysed in the *De Ira;* The characters build emotional tension and they self-diagnose through utterances about their '*dolor-ira-furor* complex' which alternates between 'self-absorption and distanced self-observation'.[735] Medea is the chief example of self-awareness since she commends her own condition among other characters who are aware of their perverse mentality (*Medea* 40-55, 926-957; *Troades* 642-662; *Phaedra* 177-185, 602-605, 636-644, 698f.; *Agamemnon* 131-144; *Thyestes* 260-266; 423-428; 434-439). Medea, more specifically, talks to herself as if she is having a dialogue with her *animus* (*Medea* 41, 895, 937, 976, 988) or her *dolor*, *ira*, and *furor* (*Medea* 139f., 897, 914, 916, 930, 944, 953). It is maintained that the passions are transgressed to 'external entities' or some kind of *dramatis persona* out of the speaking Medea.[736] However, there is one voice which oscillates between virtue and vice (meaning *ira, dolor, furor*). According to the Chrysippean theory of action and passion, there is an inner conflict, and the single Stoic self is confused and vacillates between choices and judgements, leading to right or wrong (*De Ira* 1.8.3-4). There is 'combination of emotional chaos and detached intellectual analysis', as Tarrant believes.[737] When the passions win the battle, the tragic heroes rationalise their *nefas,* and they usually display self-incitement which 'inverts'[738] the philosophically approved self-examination which results in wisdom (Seneca, *De Ira* 3.36).[739]

Clytemnestra also incites herself into action as she considers herself to be *noverca* ('thirsty for revenge,' *Agamemnon* 118f) and then she projects the characterisation to Cassandra, who is meant to be a *furens noverca* (*Agamemnon* 198f) against whom she needs to shield her children.[740] However, the fluctuation[741] of the self to passion and virtue is also evident here (*Agamemnon* 108-225, 226-309), reminding one of Medea's monologue.[742]

Another example of *ira* responsible for a catastrophic deed is Hippolytus's death. He is killed by a bull, symbolising *ira* as Fischer, among others, argues.[743] Furthermore, Fischer points out the resemblance between the depiction of the bull's *ira* and the description of the passion of anger (*ira*) in the *De Ira* (*Dial.* 4.35.4f):[744]

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[735] Mader 2014, pp. 576-577.
[736] Mader 2014, p. 577; Rosenmeyer 1989, pp. 186f (for the 'outward deflection' of the passions); on personified passions, see Liebermann 1974, pp. 86-95, 120-124; Tarrant 1976, pp. 194f (and *Ag*. 108); Tietze Larson 1994, pp. 51-53; Fitch and McElduff 2002, pp. 31f.
[737] Tarrant 1976, pp. 199 (and *Ag*. 132f). See also, Lefevre 1978d, 64f; Seeck 1977, pp. 412-419; Leeman 1976, p. 212; Liebermann 1974, p. 55 (*Oed*. 936-951); Mader 2014, pp. 577-578.
[738] Mader 2014, p. 578, where 'psychagogic monologue' is countered to the multiple voices of the passions during the self-incitement process.
[739] Rabbow 1954, pp. 180-200.
[740] Mader 2014, p. 585, n 24: Madder maintains that if lines 198b-199a are deleted (Zwierlein) the point is lost.
[741] On Clytemnestra's fluctuating of passion, see Aygon 2004, pp. 344-352.
[742] Mader 2014, p. 585.
[743] Fischer 2008, pp.100f; Schmidt 1995, p. 311; Fuhrmann 1968, p. 45.
[744] Fischer 2014, p. 749.

Talem nobis iram figuremus, flamma lumina ardentia, sibilo mugituque et gemitu et stridore et si qua his invisior vox est perstrepentem.

Seneca, *De Ira* 2. 35.5.

The eyes of personified anger are in flames (*flamma lumina ardentia, De Ira* 2.35.5). The same image is evident in *Phaedra*:

Orbibus varius color,
et quem feri dominator habuisset gregis
et quem sub undis natus: hinc flammam vomunt
oculi, hinc relucent caerula insignes nota.

Seneca, *Phaedra* 1038-1041.

Hence, the eyes of the bull (which is *ira* metaphorically) are also in flames (*flamman vomunt oculi, Phaedra* 1038-1041).

Pity

Pity is an emotion well-known and favourably spoken of in the ancient world since it relates to notions such as compassion and humanity (the notion *philanthropic* is evident in Aristotle's *Poetics*). Whereas Aristotle talks about pity in a manner which, if in moderation, might prove to be useful, Seneca explains how pity, although seen favourably by most people, is also a πάθος. He lists among his preliminaries of passions also the response to seeing punishment 'even when deserved' (reference) referring to the common view which is espoused by both Aristotle and the Stoics that pity is caused by unmerited misfortune; it is not the cruel nature of the suffering which elicits pity.[745] However, this reaction is not voluntary but rather instinctive. For the reaction to become a passion, the agent needs to assent to a moral judgment; hence, as a passion, pity needs tobe prevented in the same fashion as the rest of the Stoic passions.

Pity, however, could be deemed a virtuous quality since it fosters compassion and interest in our fellow human beings (Aristotle). However, Stoics held that to be compassionate and just, one does not need to succumb to pity, since this passion will weaken and degrade the agent. Seneca, in his *De Clementia* 2.3, suggests *clementia* as a counter to pity. *Clementia* is a proper disposition defined as *temperantia animi in potestate ulciscendi* ('mental self-control in one who hasthe power to exact revenge', *De Clementia* 2.3) and *lenitas superioris adversus inferiorem in constituendis poenis* ('mildness on the part of a superior toward an

[745] Konstan 2015, p. 179.

inferior in determining punishment', *De Clementia* 2.3) and *inclinatio animi ad lenitatem in poena exigenda* ('a tendency of the mind to toward mildness in exacting punishment,' *De Clementia* 2.3).

Hence, *clementia* is an acceptable disposition whereas pity (*misericordia*) is, being a πάθος, a vice of the mind (*De Clementia* 2.4.4). Later in the same work, Seneca compares the two notions,, paralleling *clementia* with mildness and pity with superstition and religion, claiming that the good man will not collapse at the sight of others' misfortune, whereas old women often weep at the punishment of the guilty, which has been attributed justly. He states that pity looks at the condition, whereas clemency assents to reason (*De Clementia* 2.5.1). Seneca also touches upon the view of the non-Stoic man who believes the above theory to be harsh, not leaving room for human error (*De Clementia* 2.5.2). However, it is in the πάθος of pity where the error takes place, since the human agent feels pity only when and if they assent to a wrong judgment; hence, like the rest of the passions, pity derives from a cognitive mistake. Seneca says that pity is a disturbance of the mind (*aegritudo animi, De Clementia* 2.4.5) which is caused by the misery of others or preoccupation for one's own welfare, a perturbation of which the mind of the sage is free (*De Clementia*, 2.5.4-5). *Miseria* (misery) accompanies pity, but the wise man is not to be subjected to misery since his mind never pities (*miseretur, De Clementia* 2.6.1). On the contrary, he helps those in need (*De Clementia* 2.6.3) with compassion having a certain distance like a doctor, in a tranquil spirit without succumbing to the passion of pity which blurs one's judgment and might lead to overlook serious criminal behaviours, whereas with clemency, the wise man always respects justice (*De Clementia* 2.7.3-4). There is no need to bring oneself into an emotional turmoil to kindly help another who justly deserves guidance and assistance.[746] Pity should also be avoided in situations where one needs to be punished, since a superior, usually the emperor in Seneca's work (*De Clementia* is addressed to Nero), should not let his anger exceed and turn to ferocity, nor let his pity overlook a grave, unlawful act.

It is important to show the propositional structure which is required for the πάθος of pity to be formed; Things of class O are painful or bad, and X, which is of class O, is now present. Therefore, X is painful or bad. Thus, the agent has a right to feel in a certain way and to avoid or prevent X. This logical structure takes place within the mind of the agent. If she confirms and takes the judgments to be true, the agent gives herself the green light to feel and justify both the πάθος, which is formed, and the behaviour and action that follow the inner mental procedure. For example, a judge who feels pity for the crying single poor mother who stole to feed her baby, if indulges his pity, might think in the following manner; a woman who acted badly did so because she is poor, alone and in need, which is a painful state to live in and it is believed to be bad, and hence, to be avoided, prevented or annulled. The woman's punishment would add to the woman's pain. Therefore, she does not need to be punished since pain should be avoided, and her punishment would be additionally painful.

A logic such as the above would make the judge neglect the nature of the crime itself, stealing, and would let his pity carry him away. The result would be the lack of justice since a committed crime is not

[746] Konstan 2017, p. 180.

noticed due to personal misfortune. However, this perspective might seem morally cruel to some. A variety of hypothetical scenarios though would prove that pity would not be sufficient for one to be just; would the woman be likely to be emotionally manipulating the judge so that she can get away with her transgression? And what if she had committed an even graver crime, such as fraud or murder? Furthermore, would the other persons involved (a family that lost money, or a family who lost a loved one, each of them having their own needs and emotions) have received justice? Therefore, the speculative case shows that the passion of pity would complicate the legal and moral procedures for a decision to be made.

Hence, it would be of great danger to judge having as a guide our πάθη since they depend on false propositional judgements. The risk that lurks in the mind is ruled by passions, and this is shown in vivid examples in Seneca's tragedies. In *Medea*, for instance, the king, Creon, decides to allow Medea to stay a bit longer in Corinth out of pity. In the second act (*Medea* 179-300), Seneca presents a detailed dialogue between the king and Medea, showing how the king gradually changes his mind, passing from the obsolete point of anger and determination to a level of leniency and pity. In the stichomythia in lines 192-202, Medea is trying her manipulative maneuvers on him negotiating the validity of the case against her and attacking the just or unjust nature of Creon as a king. As a result, she gets the chance to share her side of the story and explain her actions. She wants to point out (*Medea* 203-225) that an angry king finds it very difficult to leave his anger aside and change his mind when is about to make a decision; she knows of the difficulty with which royal power comes, as she is of royal descent too. However, now Fortune has changed, and she is under 'pitiable' circumstances:

> *Difficile quam sit animum ab ira*
> *flectere iam concitatum, quamque*
> *regale hoc putet,sceptris superbas*
> *quisquis admovit manus, qua coepit*
> *ire, regia didici mea.*
> *quamvis enim sim clade miseranda*
> *obruta,expulsa supplex sola deserta,*
> *undique afflicta, quondam nobili*
> *fulsi patre, avoque clarum Sole*
> *deduxi genus.*

Seneca, *Medea* 203-210.

Medea reminds Creon that he should not let his anger interfere in inflicting punishment, a teaching in accordance with Seneca's Stoic theories as shown in his *De Clementia*. Medea also claims that being superior is a matter of Fortune, which is something beyond human control; it is something arbitrary. Her fate has

changed so abruptly and now she is 'overwhelmed by pitiable disaster, exiled, a suppliant, alone, abandoned, afflicted on every side' (*clade miserandaobruta, expulsa supplex sola deserta, undique afflicta, Medea* 207-209). It is crucial that she uses the term *miseranda* since *misericordia* (pity) is the πάθος which Seneca claims should not prevail when one pays justice, since they are to be led to the wrong decision. Here, Medea wants Creon to pity her so she has time to scheme and take revenge.

Seneca preaches that when punishing one who has wronged, the superior person (either a king or an emperor) needs to refrain from both anger and pity, since both lead to mistaken actions. In *Medea*, Creon's pity towards Medea had catastrophic consequences, and it played a pivotal role in the tragedy's plot. If Medea did not have additional time to plan her evil deeds, there would be no massacre. It all started from a cognitive mistake that occurred because Creon gave his assent to pity, and he acted accordingly by letting Medea stay longer in Corinth.

Furthermore, Medea, as a master manipulator, cultivated fear within Creon; she attempted to make him identify with her and be afraid that he might find himself in the same unfortunate position, as fate was something which he could not control: *rapida Fortuna ac levis | praecepsque regno eripuit, exilio dedit*. ('Fortune, so swift and fickle and precipitate, snatched me from my kingdom, and delivered me to exile.' *Medea* 219-20). And a bit later, she adds:

> *hoc reges habent*
> *magnificum et ingens, nulla quod rapiat dies:*
> *prodesse miseris, supplices fido lareProtegere.*
>
> Seneca, *Medea* 222-25.

After nourishing and stirring the emotion within Creon, she reaches her initial goal; Creon, who is powerful but only because Fortune wishes so, and, hence, it is very likely that he loses his station too someday, he has tremendous power and a duty: to help those beneath him. She herself is one beneath him now, and she is presenting herself as weak and as being subjected to pitiable disaster. Seneca presents Medea describe a Stoic principle of *Fortuna* to manipulate Creon:

> *Sed hi quoque, ut vincerent hostem, cupiditate victi sunt. Nemo illis venientibus restitit, sed nec ipsi ambitioni crudelitatique restiterant; tunc, cum agere alios visi sunt, agebantur.*
>
> Seneca, *Epistles* 94.61-62.

Therefore, Medea prompts Creon to pity her as this is his utmost and most important kingly duty; otherwise he might cause *Fortuna*'s disdain. Creon falls right into the trap, not because Medea is invincible; she and the reasoning in her words are only external stimuli. In reality, it is Creon who has all the power, since it is

up to him to choose whether to assent to the seemingly well thought and just appeals Medea throws at him; it is Creon who makes a fatal mistake of indulging his passion (pity, fear, and vicariously lust for power, *regnum*) and gives Medea additional time to scheme, instead of trusting Nature and Fate:

> *Si quis dicit optimum esse navigare, deinde negat navigandum in eo mari, in quo naufragia fieri soleant et frequenter subitae tempestates sint, quae rectorem in contrarium rapiant, puto hic me vetat navem solvere, quamquam1 laudet navigationem.*
>
> Seneca, *De Otio* 8.8.4.

Therefore, the tragic scene is a vivid example of how indulging pity leads to catastrophic and irrational actions, since it renders the agent weakand vulnerable to vice.

Conclusion

After a thorough analysis of Chrysippus' and Posidonius' accounts on passions and views of poetry in conjunction with Seneca's moral psychology and dramaturgy, I came to the following conclusions: Firstly, contrary to Graver's claims, there are vast differences between the philosophers' moral theories due to their dispute over the monistic or tripartite nature of the soul. Such a discrepancy cannot be overlooked, and therefore, we cannot deem their accounts as simply modified but essentially similar theories. Secondly, Seneca's views align heavily with the mainstream Chrysippean emotional theory since his depicted analysis of passions in his *De Ira* points to a cognitive and rational processing of judgments and moral values in contrast to the Posidonian irrational nature of passions. Thirdly, the frequent use of poetry by the Stoics indicates its didactic and educative aspect, which is employed for Stoic purposes. These inferences, along with passages drawn mainly from Seneca's *De Ira* and *Epistles*, bring us to the following conclusions: Seneca, as seen within a Stoic philosophical tradition, favours a view of educative poetry as a secondary rational means of Stoic therapy of passions. Furthermore, Seneca's moral psychology, and especially the notion of first movements, explicate the beneficial role of the intensely emotional character of the plays. The audience is not harmed by the horrendous content of the tragedies because they do not experience real passions but only their preliminary feelings. Furthermore, according to Seneca's *De Ira*, the audience can make good use of their emotional reactions to the tragic characters' bad behaviours by observing them and critically analysing them and reaching moral improvement with the aid of the chorus's and minor characters' guidance, as shown in the second chapter. Therefore, the negative *exempla* of Seneca's plays function in an educative manner so that the audience is given a chance to problematise and reevaluate their personal beliefs. Last but not least, Seneca is guided by Nature to teach and instil seeds of moral wisdom in others by the concept of οἰκείωσις, which points to the moral development of the self and others of the same kind.

The exploration of the topics in my second chapter led to a series of conclusions pertaining to the affirmation of an educative and philosophical function of Seneca's plays. What the second chapter achieves is to demonstrate the alignment between Stoic philosophy and Seneca's tragedies, which is realised through the use of rhetorical devices, advice and *sententiae* in the chorus's mouth which guide the audience towards Stoic moral messages, such as to eschewing depending on fickle *Fortuna*, a topic which is examined further in the fifth chapter in conjunction with the Stoic concept of *indiferrentia*. Therefore, the main conclusion of the current chapter is that Seneca uses rhetorical devices and repurposes the literary role of the chorus so that he is able to teach Stoic ethics to his audience and guide the audience to exploit the tragedy as a secondary philosophical and therapeutic means to virtue. The relation between the chorus and the Stoic moral teachings intensifies the connection thread between Stoicism and Seneca's dramaturgy. Thus, Seneca's plays do present an educative function which allows for a successful Stoic reading of the plays and the necessary detachment and Stoic guidance of the audience.

In my third chapter, I endeavoured to demonstrate the educative function of Seneca's plays regarding moral psychology through Seneca's use of physiognomics, which correlates with his philosophical prose and Stoic ethics. More specifically, Seneca employed physiognomic methods shown in his depictions of *ira* and *furor* as physically manifested on his tragic characters' faces, bodies, movements and postures. Also, he often compared the protagonists' frantic behaviours to animal traits, which point to a certain passion or brutishness and insanity. Therefore, he employed physiognomic practices to illustrate passions' and *furor*'s nature, which is fully supported by his philosophical background. The comparative exploration of the tragedies and Stoic passages, especially Seneca's *De Ira*, led to the following conclusions: 1) The Stoics did not entirely dismiss a physiognomic approach for philosophical purposes as has been claimed.[747] On the contrary, Stoic physics, which views passions as corporeal events, justifies and supports a connection between Stoicism and physiognomy. 2) Furthermore, Seneca also employed physiognomy for his ethical teachings, as physiognomic comparisons between the angry man and a beast are evident in his philosophical prose.[748] 3) The analysis of tragic *exempla* shows that Seneca employed physiognomic practices within his plays, which align with the same physiognomic practices evident in his *De Ira* used to demonstrate the passions' destructive nature. 4) Therefore, Seneca's use of physiognomy within the plays points to the educative illustration of *ira*'s and *furor*'s fierce character.

The fourth chapter of my thesis is tailored to the previous discussion on the physical manifestation of emotions, which cause alterations to bodily matter. In a similar fashion, frequent exposure to strong emotions causes a permanent alteration and distortion to the agent's personality by installing uncurable mental traits in one's soul. The discussion of the current elucidates the discussion on Seneca's concept of *furor* and madness, establishing the following Stoic positions: 1) insanity and madness, viewed as a defeat of reason, originate from the recurrent experience of intense emotions, 2) the emotional causality of madness renders it an internal gradual mental process which is not immediately apparent, similarly to passions, 3) the analysis of Seneca's tragic *exempla* is in line with his philosophical position on the incurable development of madness, and 4) the human agent has a personal responsibility to prevent or cease the formation of passion with the aid of reason as long as the passion has not turned into *furor* and *feritas.* Therefore, the exploration of *furor* in Seneca's tragic *exempla* and the emphasis on personal responsibility point to the philosophical and didactic function of the tragedies.

Personal accountability of someone suffering from passions or madness is evident also in the fifth chapter, where I depict the initial reason people develop passions: their improper values, false beliefs, and bad reasoning concerning *indifferentia*, things which lack intrinsic value, according to Stoicism. The current chapter concludes with the following premises: 1) The Stoics, especially Seneca, held that *Fortuna'*s fickle and unpredictable nature renders her unreliable and, therefore, one should not base their happiness on her and what she brings, the *indifferentia*, which are not important to a person's happiness. 2) The tragic characters in Seneca's plays are often led to irrational behaviours and actions because they pursued or avoided their Fate, which is another name for *Fortuna*, blaming not their own misconceptions but the gods. 3) According to Stoicism, the

[747] Boys-Stones 2009.
[748] Seneca, *De Ira* 1.1.

human responsibility for one's actions is explicated by the Stoic action theory, according to which people value as important *indifferentia* and, therefore, develop passions. 4) The Stoic action theory explains the protagonists' behaviours within the dramatic texts since the characters are usually obsessed with an object which causes them fear or anger and eventually leads them to madness. 5) Therefore, the correlation between the tragic characters' view of *Fortuna* and *indifferentia*, and the Stoic model of action renders Seneca's philosophy Stoic and educative. Furthermore, the educative function of the plays is enhanced by the fact that the chorus often states Stoic principles: concerning *Fortuna* and *indifferentia*, they often refer to the Stoic claim that one should follow nature; otherwise, nature would drag them towards their fate. Thus, one should not try to change what *Fortuna* brings but surrender to their Fate.

All the conclusions and arguments drawn from my thesis underpin the educative and ethical function of Seneca's dramatic body of work. The Stoic background of Seneca's philosophy, the cognitive nature of his passions, the usage of anti-heroic tragic *exempla*, rhetorical advice as *sententiae* through the chorus and minor characters, the visual depiction of madness' physical manifestation all scare the audience away from passions and sets the proper environment for them to comprehend the emotional causality of madness as an ingrained process and the origin of passions to humans' misconceptions of *indifferentia* and *Fortuna*, which leads them to improper values and wrong judgments, and therefore to passions and irrational actions according to the Stoic model of action. The establishment of the ethical and educative function of Seneca's tragedies renders them compatible with the philosopher's Stoic theoretical system and, therefore, allows for a fully Stoic reading and interpretation, refuting the main challenges and objections analysed by the anti-Stoic proponents.

In conclusion, it would be wise to mention the limitations and the opportunities for further research presented in the current project. The real number of Stoic topics detected within the tragedies vastly exceeds the Stoic principles evident within the plays and analysed in conjunction with Seneca's philosophical compositions. Such an objective would surpass the scope of my thesis. Furthermore, I focused more on the exploration of *ira, furor*, and less on *timor* and *amor.* A vast range of passions and mental dispositions could be studied further so that the tragic emotions obtain full Stoic philosophical integrity, and the mental processes of the characters are even clearer and more obvious to the reader. Furthermore, due to limited space, I employed *exempla* as case studies mostly from *Medea, Thyestes, Hercules Furens, and less by Phaedra, Oedipus* and *Agamemnon*, but further research could be done in the same vein taking into consideration all ten Seneca's plays, including those who might be not written by him. Despite the limitations, I hope I have sufficiently argued that Seneca's drama can be thought of as a successful sample of philosophical tragedy, which, if seen under a Stoic prism, guides and conveys moral messages to the audience through the tragic exemplification and dramatisation of Stoic principles, and mainly the destructive nature of unbridled passions. Furthermore, I wish that the current project lays the groundwork for a deeper look into Senecan poetics in conjunction with his moral psychology, and I hope that it might function as an engine for future comparative research.

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