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The Illusion of Philosophical Solution: Cicero and a (Mis)Use of Stoic *oikeiosis*

In an effort to quell the troubles of his later years, Cicero sought therapy in philosophy. Cicero's adoption of Stoicism and an application of the Stoic theory of *oikeiosis* are the focus of this talk. I will show how Cicero used the *oikeiosis* model, and how he misused it. I will argue that, despite his efforts, he could find no salve in philosophy.

Stoic philosophers believed that the universe (and all systems within it) was comprised of three parts: *logos*, *pneuma*, and *tonos*. Each part occupied a specific place, and formed a natural attachment to the part next to it in the sequence. The Stoic theory of *oikeiosis* appealed to this process of attachment: via *oikeiosis* man accessed the external world. Hierocles pictured this system as a series of concentric circles. At the center was the individual; closest to him was the *oikos*, then the city, other cities, the country, the human race, and the world. Hierocles suggested that an individual contract the circles, with the eventual aim of making all things part of his *oikos*. Thus, *oikeiosis* was a process of moving out into the world, and a system of appropriating the world into the self.

Cicero used Stoic philosophy to make a radical move into himself. He made the internal realm of mind his new *oikos*. In order to move *in se*, Cicero promoted the positive qualities of the internal world (*vid. Par. Stoic.* 2.17; 1.14; 2.17; *Tusc. Disp.* 5.67; *etc.*). He also described the shortcomings of those who rely on the external world (*vid. PS* 5.36, 38; 2.17; *etc.*).

Cicero uses himself to show the benefits of the internal realm. He uses Dionysios the tyrant to show the unhealthiness of the material world (*TD* 5.58ff). Cicero reveals the tyrant retreating into the material world in order to hide from the world. The tyrant's retreat reifies and perpetuates the sick state of both his mind and his relationship to architecture. In terms of *oikeiosis*, Dionysios contracts, but also severs, the concentric circles emanating out from the home. His strange relation to the material world is a misapplication of *oikeiosis*. The tyrant seems to stand in direct contrast to the sage: the wise man dwells contentedly in internal space, whereas the insane man dwells anxiously in a troubled interior.

Closer inspection of Cicero's move *in se* presents a problem: as Cicero radically internalizes all things, he creates a microcosm that resembles Dionysios' material world. Cicero's internal realm is the mere psychic equivalent to the physical domain of the tyrant. The potential for solution that the internalization process offered dwindles. Thus, the *oikos* within the self is a troubled space: it is both a space that cannot uphold the Stoicism it is supposed to reproduce, and a non-space that is too radically constructed to be ultimately effective.