

Why is the Stoic cosmos intelligent?

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The Stoics maintain that the cosmos as a whole is animated and, in consequence, that it displays all the powers or 'capacities' (δυνάμεις) associated with the possession of a soul. One interesting topic of research, which I shall not discuss, is that of how these different psychic powers are manifested at the cosmic level: the Stoic cosmos must have all of them if it is to have a soul, but in what form? What I plan to do here is to focus on the *one* power that the Stoics usually have in mind when they assert that the cosmos is animated: the power of intelligence (νοῦς): according to the Stoics, the cosmos is, like us, the agent of thoughts, something that thinks.

The proofs that they give to support this claim may be divided into two different families. According to  $F_1$ : ( $a_1$ ) the intelligent is better than the unintelligent, but ( $b_1$ ) the cosmos is better than everything else; therefore, the cosmos is intelligent. In contrast, according to  $F_2$ : ( $a_2$ ) humankind develops from a seed; ( $b_2$ ) humankind is intelligent, and if so its seed too must be intelligent; ( $c_2$ ) the seed of humankind is a part of the cosmos; therefore, the cosmos is intelligent. Each family is related to a different part of Stoic philosophy. The key idea in  $F_1$  is *teleological* (the cosmos is that for the sake of which all other natural beings exist), whereas the key idea  $F_2$  is *causal* (the cosmos is the ultimate cause of the powers of its parts, and it must have the powers that it causes its parts to have). But how are the two families connected? They are, of course, fully consistent with each other. But neither of them implies the other; in fact, teleology and causation are two relatively independent areas in Stoicism: all causes are active but teleological explanations do not necessarily require that the explanans acts on the explanandum. Thus, one of the many advantages of studying  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  together is that they illustrate how two relatively independent areas of Stoic philosophy collaborate with one another to establish a specific thesis, in the case, the intelligence of the cosmos.