

# The Concept of State and Law in Seneca's Work and Their Implications in the Development of Human Society

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**ABSTRACT:** The philosopher, and especially the artist, thanks to the expressive force of his writing, Seneca was one of the great masters of the European cultural tradition that inspired Petrarca and Calderon, Shakespeare and Corneille, Rousseau, who owes the very idea of confession. Seneca's philosophical, political and legal conception is a true key to the correct understanding of the evolution of natural law in the legal and supreme concept of understanding the „true reason” of the wise man of virtues. It analyzes the development of human rights that arise from the rights of the individual and of nature (the one that brings social harmony, emotional and psychological balance to the wise man), which will influence the society from antiquity until nowadays. There is a clear resemblance between the precepts of the Stoic philosopher and the precepts Christian religion. Consult not only by philosophers, but also by the Fathers of the Christian Church or by many Christian moralists his ideas made him.

**KEY WORDS:** Seneca, morality, state, law, Christianity, psychoanalysis, virtues

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## Introduction

Lucius Annaeus Seneca was born in a very pragmatic Roman world, in a senatorial family in Spain, which seems to be destined for a political career and forced to acquire oratory art. Although an adept of Stoic philosophy,

Seneca's writing cannot be framed exclusively in any of the Hellenistic philosophical schools existing to him, because the work of the Roman thinker actually reflects his life experience. In essence, there is a specific approach to the sale of personality, an essential philosophy that brings up issues addressed by the philosophy of predecessors, but does not express itself without prior criticism of any of the solutions proposed by them.

Emphasizing his own life experience, he transforms the ancient Greek stoicism into the concept called today *neo-Stoicism*, starting from the principles of Stoic philosophers, but also contributing to the personal interpretations that gave birth to neo-Stoicism, whose priority is a *moral domain* (Popa, Dogaru, Dănișor G. and Dănișor C. 2010, 76).

First, Seneca can be considered an educator for both contemporaries and later generations, an educator of the human race. Through this appreciation of education, Seneca continues the tradition of Greek philosophy and attaches great importance to education. Even if it starts from the common consciousness of life, it comes with a reassessment of this conception: happy people are, in fact, the unhappy - a vision that changes values makes us consider some desirable, morally moral aspects, when we enter our condition.

Like the Stoic tradition, it shares the idea that the intellect of young people must be educated in order to get rid of the errors of common concepts and to gain possession of the knowledge of good and evil. People have to guide themselves according to the principle of the only good is the moral one; to aspire to possess perfect goodness and not a particular good because he is equally an aspirant to divine greatness. The supreme good of care aspires to man is different from that possessed by gods and the way to good, even if extremely difficult is always possible.

Another essential feature of Seneca's philosophy derives from how the nature of virtue is conceived, because in the center of the Stoic doctrine is the idea that virtue is sufficient for life. This vision of virtue is also found in Socrates and Plato. As to the way Seneca understands the nature of Seneca virtue, it is equally in the tradition of the old Stoics. If we look closely into Seneca's texts, we realize that the sage has plunged into eternity, the wisdom contender uses every opportune moment of his life to gain eternity, and the

vicious loses every appropriate moment of his life. Achieving moral perfection involves going through several states of mind, depending on the degree of capitalization of the right moment (*kairos*).

The great purpose of life is the acquisition of virtue both at the theoretical level and at the practical level, aspect from which the meaning of philosophy emerges, as well as the ideal of the wise, so widespread later (Georgescu 2001, 31). For Seneca, philosophy is both *contemplatio* and *actio*, and this fact finds an echo even in the way Seneca conceives his *parenesis* and educational discourse.

Seneca's concern is the practice of virtue more than the theoretical investigation of its nature: philosophy is not in words, but in deeds and in a case as a repudiation of any theoretical interest. The inner energy liberated by the cultivation of virtue receives, thanks to joy, its true value, the joy that represents the exclusive welfare of the wise. Through the calm that he possesses, he differs from any other intellectual, from any other lover of the arts and sciences. Only the wise man goes beyond anxiety and finds the existential balance.

The concept of education proposed by Seneca implies, besides improving the terrestrial life and overcoming this existence, as well as a happy life of the soul in the company of all the souls of the wise men of the past, after it has separated from human existence. In this way, his philosophical conception is „a true religion”; the political conception - highlights the „gullible political man, eager for power”, but who must possess the peace of mind necessary for the accomplishment of the proposed tasks; and the legal conception - the adept of the principality, sees in the monarchy the „state form according to nature”, a militant of the natural law, the supremacy of the individual on the state, the equality of men and the supreme good that gives birth to the true human virtue (Popa, Dogaru, Dănișor G. and Dănișor C. 2010, 77-81).

### *Motivation of choosing the theme*

From a specialist study, I realized that Seneca philosopher is currently one of the most widely read Latin authors. This finding led me to investigate the importance of his philosophical / political / legal concepts, exposed in

his vast opera, in a conquering language, based on a rhetoric that fascinates contemporary man.

*The actuality of the subject and the importance of the issues addressed*

The actuality and importance of the theme addressed derives precisely from the fundamental aspects of Seneca thought, which interrogates the social, political and legal-contemporary actor in relation to:

- ✦ The ideal form of government of the state - the monarchy or the republic?
- ✦ On the theory of natural law - it takes the natural aspect (divine) or the human one?
- ✦ The role of virtues in human life
- ✦ Moral perceptions found in Christian religion
- ✦ The psychopathological or psychoanalytic aspects present in his works

## 1. State concept - political these

When we relate to Seneca's political discourse, we take into consideration four important moments, illustrated by the following works:

a) *About anger*, which still adheres to the optics of the aristocracy, as an embryo of the doctrine of the monarchy;

b) *About the shortness of life*, where civic disengagement is expected, but Claudius's philosophical conversion is also attempted;

c) *About leniency*, which, after the soul's peace and *Apollocyntosis*, includes a program of government;

d) *Epistles to Lucilius* and other works of late, which translate definitive withdrawal from political life, abandonment of political science, defeat of the political philosopher.

In Seneca's view, political activity is the result of the lessons learned from the ideas of the Stoic school, which do not advise the wise to abstain from this activity, but on the condition that this activity does not disturb the soul's peace of mind. In this way, action is not an end in itself, but only the way through which mediation acquires the peace of mind, this being

the true finality. By addressing this issue in the *Work of tranquility animi* the Spanish thinker identifies three external factors that could divert or divert the individual from action: *uncertain eloquence, insufficient wealth* to cope with spending required by political life, and *poor health*. (Seneca 1928-1935, 73)

### 1.1. *Universal State and Monarchy - the ideal forms according to nature*

In Seneca's opinion, people are born equal and possess equal rights to cultivate wisdom and virtue as expressions of a natural but also universal right: Human law has no value unless it corresponds to universal or natural law (Cloșcă and Suceavă, 1995, 26).

Seneca sees the monarchy in the form of a state conforming to nature, so that it understands this form as the only way to prevent the destructive action of exaggerated freedoms, though based on the *concept of wisdom* seeks to substantiate the principle of *individual autonomy*. Thus, the pre-eminence of individual autonomy over political activity has the significance of detaching the political man from the political activity that he considers only the individual's choice, the way chosen to achieve the good in society.

### 1.2. *The diarchy system - the balance of power between the emperor and the senate*

*Principality and freedom*: official ideology does not rise to the rank of theory, and the official doctrine claims that August restored the republic compromised by civil wars. Senator thinker, actually pleaded for August's diarchic system (the balance of power between the emperor and the Senate), but this diarchy was not a reality. In *De Clementia*, he defines the good Caesar: there must be a prince, but it must act in the interests of the subjects, and not of his. He is the guardian and not the master, the representative of the people endowed with a divine power, but not a god, and he must be before all the servant and interpreter of the law (Könczöl 2008).

*Diarhia* (diarchy) is the system that demands the division of power: for Seneca, however, everything that exists is only through the concession of the Emperor, his personality is the determining factor. The only hope is that he is a wise man who realizes his unlimited powers, yet accept the limits of being the servant of the positive law and the moral law. So Seneca's system was ultimately based on an act of faith (Universul românesc 2011).

Moreover, in *De ira*, Seneca had stated that the „governor of the citadel”, the *rector civitatis* (he uses a wide range of terms to designate the good sovereign), must treat his subjects as a „physician”, the physician of the soul, a philosopher, to direct those who suffer from vices. Thus, the monarch was converted into a philosopher or faithful student of the philosophers (The Latin Library n.d.).

## 2. Concept on right - legal consideration

### 2.1. Natural law

In the same way as Cicero, Seneca is the follower of natural law and conformity with nature: *If you live in harmony with nature, you will never be weakened; if you live according to your beliefs, you will never be rich*. Even if it is a subjective right, it is fundamental and represents the true human law that imposes an intrinsic sanction: *What does not stop the law stops the good will* (Seneca 1984, 28).

It will focus on moral aspects in its philosophy, the right being in accordance with ethics, and the human law in accordance with normal nature:

*Not to follow the fruit of the benevolent, but the good things themselves, looking well after knowing only the evil, which is the property of a beautiful and good miracle. How great would be the act of being useful to many people if there was no one left disappointed* (Seneca 2005, 138).

Seneca exalts and purifies gestures of gratitude and gratitude from the Roman clientele, integrating them into an autonomous and conscious social morality. In this paper, Seneca is in favor of a „treatise” - *social foedus*, which alleviates the moral conflicts and at the same time preserves the established order, adapted, of course, to the edifice of the society of the epoch, calling into question the obligation to help the one in need: *He has advised to stretch forth the hand of the one who is boastful, to show the way of the lost, to divide the bread with the fed* (Seneca, 2005, 153).

### 2.2. Human rights

The human rights concept is found in the form of Roman humanity (*humanitas Romana*), being very well theorized in the treaties of Seneca and Cicero. This

notion is the equivalent of the Greek *philatrophia*, but improved with the traditional Roman values and their well-known pragmatism.

The two Roman thinkers seem to try to steal Greece's glory of philosophy, calling for virtues as *otium* and creating a complementarity between the pragmatic and contemplative aspect of life (Cicero 1998, 10).

Later, Seneca would recommend public activity only to the extent that it does not conflict with the principles of the Stoic doctrine and does not prevent the achievement of the desires of the concept of human rights (Guțu 1999, 229). The concept of human rights, in Seneca's view, is a complex of distinct and severe values that were part of the code of conduct of a Roman citizen and which are virtually impossible to translate into Greek: *pietas* (which is different from *eusebeia*) morals / *mores* (which do not exactly coincide with *ethos*) and *dignitas, gravitas, integritas, clementia, aequitas, lenitas, mansuetudo, moderatio, indulgentia, iustitia, fides* and so on. Thus, the idea of humanity subsumes all these values, universalizing them (Schadewaldt 1973, 43-62).

As far as the application of human rights is concerned, humanity goes almost to the detriment of the clemency component and does not always have a similar impact on the Roman scene as in the Republican period, although metamorphoses of the concept and progress, on certain levels, are still met (Bauman 2000, 67-86).

**Equality between citizens** becomes a legal equality before civil law and a political equality in front of legislative and executive functions (giving birth to privileges that have influenced both private and public rights). Thus, it can be seen that the analysis of rights cannot be complete unless it starts from the analysis of other concepts, such as freedom, equality or individuality, the analysis of aspects related to the economic, political, social or philosophical environment.

**Freedom.** In Seneca's view, there is no hierarchical scale between virtues, possessing individuals, the same degree, so that all who practice them are equal. At the same time, we could say that they are not just equal but equaled by this participation in moral life (Popa, Dogaru and Dănișor 2010, 81).

Virtues are not mysterious elements, but they are matters that are within reach of any man, that is, they can be easily understood by anyone:

„Virtue is not closed to anyone: it is within reach of all. Everybody receives them; they all call them free or dissolute, slaves, kings, or surgeons. He does not choose his rank or asset. He is content with the equal man” (Seneca 2005, 74). In Seneca’s opinion, *freedom* is an extremely important desideratum, a value that does not bear any material comparison, even when it is balanced with a very precious metal: *Freedom is not sold for all the gold in the world.*

*Equality* is not just in the face of justice, but also in society: any citizen must be able to have similar conditions to launch himself in the face of the great choices of existence. Every citizen has the right to a minimum of existence and the modern materialization of values such as the dignity of the person, equity, safety, solidarity in the period. Equality is manifested in several ways: before the law, the equal treatment of all citizens who find themselves in the same situation, the denial of privileges integrated with morals. However, in this case, the value has also evolved into opportunities. So it does not matter from what environment you are, what a race you are, you have the same possibilities.

### **3. Seneca - precursor of Christianity**

One of the important aspects of Seneca’s implications is the likeness of his philosophy, thinking, concepts, etc. with Christian philosophy. There are indeed some analysts who believe that Christian ideology was inspired by the work of the great ancient philosopher, some even asserting that there was a correlation between the apostle Paul and Seneca, declaring that the latter was Christianized, which is not historically confirmed, but creates an interest in literature.

Seneca belonged to the Stoic current, which despised luxury, ambush, life without any high concern, concepts that we find in Christian conduct as well. In his vast opera, many passages resemble Christian religion (Rotaru 2005a, 204-205). Seneca, as well as other ancient philosophers, had many moral precepts, precepts of absolute and immutable good. They believed that good governs the world and that it always overcomes. Seneca was therefore stoic. He placed virtue, the pursuit of philosophy, the fleeing of wealth, the help of others, the gentleness, and the good deeds. The concept of equality in Seneca, similar to that of Christianity, has been proven by the actual sacrificial

act it has shown, as well as by many followers of the Christian religion that have gone to the ultimate sacrifice.

In the table below, we will make a comparative textual analysis between the perceptions of the Stoic doctrine in Seneca's view and the Christian perceptions existing in the Bible, easily observing obvious similarities between the two doctrines (Gheorghe 2008).

| <b>Theme</b>  | <b>The perceptions of the Bible</b>   | <b>Seneca's perceptions</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| <b><i>Straightening the sinner</i></b>                      | "I do not wish the sinner's death but his right" (Ezekiel 18: 23)   | <i>How human will be to show a gentle and parenting soul to the guilty, and not to follow the parables, but to bring them in the right way (Seneca 1981, 24)</i>   |
| <b><i>Love of the enemy and forgiveness of his sins</i></b> | "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do well to those who hate you, and pray for those who harm you and persecute you. That you may be the sons of your Father in heaven, that He causes the sun to rise upon the wicked and the good, and sends the rains upon the righteous and the unjust." (Matthew 5: 44-45) | <i>It is not in the nature of a wise man to hate the lost; otherwise, he will hate himself. (Seneca 1981, 25)</i>  |
| <b><i>The source of evil</i></b>                            | "What comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and that defiles the man." (Matthew 15: 18)  | <i>Therefore, we must know that the evil we suffer does not come from the places we are in, but on the contrary, from within us. However, realize: maybe all evil comes from your soul. (Seneca 2004, 81, 85)</i>  |
| <b><i>Your bad friends distort good habits</i></b>          | "Whoever walks with the wise is wise, but whoever accompanies the madman will have trouble." (Proverbs 13:20)   | <i>When we choose our friends, let us look for the less afflicted. Evil spreads when the sick mix with healthy people. (Seneca 2004, 89)</i>   |
| <b><i>About judging others</i></b>                          | "Do not judge not to be judged." (Matthew 7: 1)   | <i>Some have to learn not to reproach anything (Seneca 2005, 138)</i>  |
| <b><i>Charity</i></b>                                       | "Better be merciful from the things in, and then all shall be clean." (Luke 11: 41)   | <i>Not to follow the fruits of benevolence, but the benefits themselves, to seek the good after knowing only the evil, that is what is of a great and good heart. How great would be the act of being useful to many people if there was no one left disappointed (Seneca 2005, 139)</i> |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><i>Let go without the thought of receiving</i></p> | <p>“Whosoever asked, give it.” (Luke 6:30)<br/>         “And if you lend to those from whom you hope to take back what reward is yours?”<br/>         “Do well and lend without hope for anything in return. In addition, your reward will be great.” (Luke 6: 34-35)</p> | <p><i>Merit is to do services without the thought of restitution. The noble soul man gathers the fruit of blessing from the act of giving himself. A true man never thinks of restitution unless the debtor announces it. Thus, the service turns into a credit act, and bringing a paid service is a shameless shit!</i><br/>         (Seneca 1981, 138, 139)</p> <p><i>We have to teach people to offer, to receive and to return from the heart. Let us give it the way we want to get. First of all in the heart, fast without hesitation. The man who is hesitant is very close to refusal and will not attract any gratitude. Since in the act of blessing the intention of giving has the greatest charm, when hesitation proves lack of will.</i><br/>         (Seneca 2005, 47)</p> |
| <p><i>The kingdom of God and the soul of man</i></p>  | <p>“For, behold, the kingdom of God is within us.” (Luke 17:21) “And we have not received the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit that comes from God so that we may know the things God has given us by his grace.”<br/>         (Corinthians 2: 12)</p>                 | <p><i>The God is near you, he is with you, and he is within you. Inside us is a divine spirit, watching for both good and evil. In every man, a god dwells.</i><br/>         (Seneca – Letter XLI)</p>   |
| <p><i>There is no human right without God</i></p>     | <p>“There is no righteous man, not even one.”<br/>         (Romans 3: 10-12)</p>  | <p><i>There is no virtuous man alien to divinity.</i><br/>         (Seneca – Letter XLI)</p>   |
| <p><i>Helping those hungry and thirsty</i></p>        | <p>“Divide the bread with the hungry, and bring into the house the poor homeless.”<br/>         (Isaiah 58: 6)</p>  | <p><i>We will advise them to stretch forth the hand of the drowning, to show the way of the wanderer, to divide his bread with the hungry.</i> (Seneca – Letter XCV)</p>   |
| <p><i>About Concerns</i></p>                          | <p>“Do not worry about your life, thinking what you will eat or drink.” (Matthew 6:25)</p>  | <p><i>What will be in the future we will see for now, however, no care. However, there is tomorrow. First, if there are unquestionable fears of a future misfortune, for most of the times we fight with imagined assumptions.</i><br/>         (Seneca – Letter XIII)</p>   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>About avoiding tribulations</b>      | "And then who among you, even worrying, may add an elbow to his height." (Matthew 6:28)   | <i>Let us carry on not as if we should live for the flesh, but as if we could not live without the flesh. From too much love for him, we are tormented by fears, burdened by worries, exposed by reproaches. (Seneca - Letter XIV)</i><br><i>The life of the mad man is unhappy and always mournful, and always driven to tomorrow. (Seneca – Letter XIV)</i> |
| <b>About the futility of wealth</b>     | "See and beware of all kinds of greed, for one's life is not in the abundance of his wealth." (Luke 12: 19)   | <i>Get rid of these deceptive goods occasionally, more to whom he likes than whom he has. For if they had any consistency, they would also satisfy you, so only the thirst of those who swallow them. Close to this delusive brightness. (Seneca – Letter XV)</i>   |
| <b>Wealth vs. The Kingdom of Heaven</b> | "Teacher, what good should I do to have eternal life? If you want to come alive, keep the commandments. I have carefully guarded all these commandments, what am I missing. If you want to be perfect, go sell what you have, give it to the poor." (Matthew 19: 19-22) | <i>For much wealth, there was a hindrance to philosophy. (Seneca – Letter XVII)</i>   |
| <b>Good man and evil man</b>            | "The good man brings forth good things out of the good treasure of his heart, and the evil man brings out evil things from the evil treasure of his heart." (Luke 6:45)<br>"There is no good tree to make a bad fruit and no evil tree to make good fruit." (Luke 6:43) | <i>The sinner turns all things into evil, even those that look very good. The righteous and unthankful man directs the wickedness of fate softens the hardness and salience of things through the science of bearing them, receives the good days with gratitude and modesty, and the evil ones with steadfastness and courage. (Seneca – Letter XCVIII)</i>  |
| <b>About vices</b>                      | "The greedy man of fortune troubles his house, but he who hates the bribe will live." (Proverbs 15: 27)   | <i>... Soulful souls are greed, cruelty and other rooted vices; therefore, evil, in all its forms: malice, envy, pride. (Seneca – Letter CVI)</i>   |

Table 1. *Parallellism between Christian perceptions and Seneca's perceptions*

## Conclusions

- ✦ There is a clear resemblance between the precepts of the Stoic philosopher and the precepts Christian religion. Consult not only by philosophers, but also by the Fathers of the Christian Church or by many Christian moralists his ideas made him.

- ✦ Seneca is attracted to faith in Providence, to God, and he hopes in a better „beyond”, for whom the world here is just a place to prepare. In the face of human misery, Seneca glorifies the following virtues: mercy, gentleness, endless love for men. For this reason, Seneca was highly prized by the Fathers of the Christian Church.
- ✦ There are opinions that claim that there is a correspondence between Rome in Rome

Paul and Stoic philosopher Seneca, an apocryphal work. Paul, a man of great culture, could write Seneca's writings. Besides, Tertullian, the Christian writer of the second century, talked about the Roman philosopher not by *Seneca noster*.

We do not know if Seneca knew Pauline epistles. However, some understanding of the Christian stoic is visible. In Lucilius's epistle, Seneca writes to her the following: Do we not actually die when we actually die, and when we die, we are born to the true life; where there is no day-night alternation, because it is constant light?

This could indicate a rapprochement between Seneca and Christianity that made Tertullian, which otherwise was drastic with tradition, not to let Seneca: *ours* (Vlăduțescu 2015).

## 4. Methodical contemplation, psychoanalysis and the psychology of suffering

### 4.1. *The art of methodical contemplation and the discourse („parenza”)*

**Definition.** PARENEZA s. f. Discourse that glorifies virtue; speech, discourse to unleash feelings, actions; encouragement, exhortation, impulse, excitement, exorcism (<fr. *parènèse*, *parainesis*)

Seneca was a militant for the renewal of mentality and writing, he was not an admirer of the past, but attested to the sense of historical becoming ironing the passers-by. For him, his ancestors were no better than the Romans of his time and the vices are of men, not of the ages. This means that not times and human communities are vicious, but only certain individuals. Seneca is an excellent observer of his contemporaries, subtle, pursuant, particularly acute, which reconstitutes the psychological conditions of a happy life and

the harmonious insertion of man into the universe while at the same time investigating the profound mechanisms of the human psyche.

Starting from his analyzes, certain conquests of modern psychopathology can be anticipated when he observes deep psychic psychics and psychological phobias seemingly inexplicable phobias and anxious psychics, grievance, exaggerated susceptibility, culpability, ingratitude, exhibitionism (Cizek 1979, 7-28).

The Stoic philosopher notes that some people are extravagantly dressed for fear that they would otherwise go unmoved by their peers, which they irritate. Although they are contradicted, they are forced not to ignore them. This issue is an example of social psychology that applies to any generation, the chapter of fashion being one with sound implications in the life of society, so we can undoubtedly say that some observations are confined to the "blame of the age" - *conuicium saeculi*. In other respects, the *parenetic* demonstration is always free, within a desirable structure, at the level of a remarkable representation, and contradictions, sometimes strident, between one idea and another, on the same issue do not disturb Seneca, the opportunity, of the right time — the *eukairia*.

The main character of the stoic philosopher's prose is himself, a man possessed of calm and high moral attitude, but also of the desire to improve the political status of the Empire, of strong ambitions, of the taste of world success and remarkable stylistic performances. At the same time, Seneca practices seemingly disorganized structural patterns of his speech, but is true cultural acts: satire, the epistle centered on spontaneity and improvisation or dialogue. In the context of the Senecan Dialogue, it stems mainly from the cynic-stoic diatribe, where the orator and philosophy teacher severely reprimands the villagers or disciples, and uses the exciting discussion method, even the polemic with an imaginary interlocutor, a fictitious opponent whose interventions are, in short, offering a good opportunity for the long demonstrations pronounced by the philosopher. For example, in the work *About Happy Life* behind the fictitious interlocutor partially dissimulate real opponents of Seneca's life. At the same time, the philosopher speaks and writes for the other, whom, like Plato sometime, strives to convince him gradually, in a proper language impregnated with the process of declamation and rhetoric.

The emphasis is definitely on human behavior and on individual conduct, while satirical attacks against real individuals involve a generalizing value that attributes to the Senecan dialogue a very lax macro-syntax of literary discourse. There is an inner psychological seduction that the philosopher exposes to the human mind and soul, which gives him a high parenetic strategy in the elaboration of authentic scenarios around his ideas based on variations on a given theme, treats it on different successive plans (Trillitsch 1962, 12)

Below is the logical scheme of Senecan discourse:

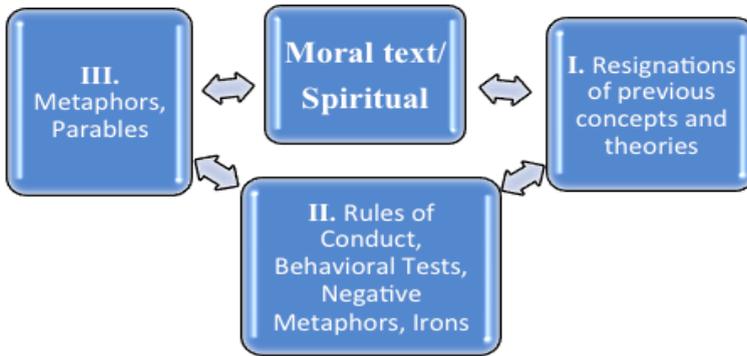


Figure 1. The logical scheme of Seneca discourse

According to the above figure, each dialogue appears elaborated around a spiritual nucleus that assures its unity in the depth structure: a progressive dialectics leads readers to the universal understanding of concepts. The Roman oratorical techniques on human consciousness (*suasoriae*), illustrating digressions, the many revealing examples, the special fragments of a discourse (*the tirade*) and the rhetorical amplifications are contributed.

#### 4.2. The importance of time in self-examination

Seneca talks about happiness, virtue and the time that many mortals cannot fully appreciate. He reminds us that we alone are the beneficiary of our time and life, which is why we should be careful how we use it.

„Time is the only good thing that really belongs to you. You choose what to do with each moment, with what to measure the Time for your Life. When they keep their fortunes, people are very stingy, however, when it comes to spending their time, the only case in which the avarice is to be praised, becomes wasteful” (Seneca 1967, XVI).

It also reminds us of the importance of knowing our values, according to which we live our life and who give us the impetus to achieve certain things, and if we know our goals, it is essential to live a meaningful life with feelings of fulfillment. Most people did not simply make an insight into their final goals, so they do not even know what could make them happy.

*All people want to live happily when it comes to seeing clearly what makes their life happy, their eyes blur; and, far from easily acquiring a happy life, the more impatient the one who leaps over her, the stronger she takes away, if she somehow strays the road. When the road goes in the opposite direction, the rush itself causes the removal. First, we should decide what this is what we are looking for, and then look at what path we can best turn to it. However, as long as we wander at random, without following a guide, but just the shrieks and cries of all kinds of those who call us in different directions, life will be wasted between stray roads and shortened, no matter how hard we strive, from day and night. Let us therefore determine what we are aiming for and how. (Seneca 1967, XVI)*

In the context of time, the Stoic philosopher addresses the subject of death, a so frequent reason for human fears and the study of the psychological phenomenon that such a complex theme creates. He believes that the subject of death should be a reason to live our life more intensely and wisely than fear of it: *All life must learn to live, and even, even more surprisingly, we must learn to die all our lives ... Whoever chirpines his every day as the last, neither longing for tomorrow nor afraid of it (Seneca 2014, 17)*

The Stoic philosopher also addresses the theme of wealth and the role that it plays in our lives, emphasizing that the wise does not love riches and does not receive them in his soul, but prefers them in and does not reject the wealth he has, but preserves them and wants them to give him a richer material for his virtue. In the wise man's house the wealth plays a slave, and in the wicked, the place of a master (Seneca 2014, 17).

Another important topic in the context of the importance of time and self-examination is the theme of learning, the importance of having a receptive, firm and integral mind when it comes to learning. It is not enough to accumulate many experiences if we do not have the wisdom of turning them into lessons for the future: *A self-assured spirit and calmness rocks through all the nooks of its life. As it does not use anything, no matter how much water you pour into a vessel, if there is no bottom to hold it and hold it, it does not matter how long you have given it. If he does not have a place to fix himself, he goes, piercing through the cracks and holes of the soul* (Seneca 2014, 17).

It is also very important the *theme of human behavior*, which it does not have to agree with most, Seneca details how useless and unproductive the world view is and the adjustment of behavior according to it: *Nothing brings bigger shortcomings than the fact that we take into account what the world says, which is generally approved, and that we live not by judgment, but by the principle of imitation. The result is that people are piling up on each other, climbing. Let us therefore look for what is best to do, and not what is more common, what will bring us a lasting happiness, and not what is found among the vulgar, the worst interpreter of the truth* (Seneca 2014, 17).

Seneca is preoccupied with the time (*cronos*) of human life, realizing the fragile and short aspect of man's time on this earth, so he agrees with Hippocrates when he says: *Vita brevis est, ars longa – Life is short, eternal science* (Seneca 1981, 41).

Another aspect the philosopher is interested in is the waste of time, arguing that *laziness and vices* contribute to this waste of time that you can never recover, and "those who dwell in the pleasures of stomach and love give proving degrading degradation." „The shortest and most disturbing life has those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear the future." In addition, the retreat in solitude is the aspect of the powerful people, demonstrating that retreat for a time in solitude is preferred any material or material matter in Seneca's conception (Seneca 1981, 41).

#### 4.3. Seneca - a precursor to Freud's psychoanalysis and the psychology of suffering

**Definition. Psychoanalysis 1.** The set of *Freud's conceptions* of conscious and unconscious psychic life, after which the deep tendencies or desires

of the individual conflict with his moral beliefs and are driven into the subconscious, from where they tend to recur in a transvestite form. 2. A method of psychological analysis and treatment of neuropsychiatric diseases, which aims to discover the causes of neuroses and psychoses and to cure these diseases through various tests (word associations, dreams, interpretations of confused figures, etc.). – From fr. *Psychanalyse*.

### A. The Oedipus complex

Tragedy Oedipus king (Old Greek - Οιδίπους Τύραννος - Oidipous Tyrannos) is a tragedy written by Sophocles and played for the first time around 429 BC. In his turn, Seneca also portrays the drama The Tragedy of Oedipus, with similarities to the work of Sophocles, but also quite important differences between the two works.

**Myth (abstract):** *Oedipus is the son of Laios, the king of the city of Theba, and of Jokastea. An oracle foretold Laios that his own son, who would then marry Yokasta, so that Laios gave Laios a servant instructing him to abandon him as far as possible, would kill him. Some Corinthian shepherds who take him to the court of King Polybus find the Oedipus.*

*Polybus becomes father until Oedipus reaches the age of manhood. Then he goes to Delphi to consult the oracle. On the way, in a tiny place, some traveler coming from the opposite side ordered them to leave aside to let them pass. Oedipus refuses and there is a fight in which he kills two people. One of these was Laios, his own father, whom Oedipus did not know. Thus, the prophecy is fulfilled. After the death of Laios, the king of Theba became Creon.*

*At Theba, Oedipus accepts the Sphinx challenge. He put a question to the Tebanians and how they could not answer killing them. Then King Creon promises the hand of Jacob - and the royal crown - to the one who will escape the Sphinx. Oedipus responded to the following enigma: "Who walks in the morning in four legs, at noon in two, and in the evening in three?" Oedipus guessed that it was a man (who, in his childhood, goes beating, using his hands and feet, at noon, ie he matures on two legs, and in the evening - in old age - he rests in a cane). Thus, Oedipus obtains the promised reward: the throne of the city of Theba, and the hand of Queen Iocasta, whom she does not know to be her own mother.*

*From their marriage are born four children: Eteocle, Polynice, Antigona and Ismene. However, the city of Theba is haunted by a terrible plague that no one finds the cure. The subjects die one after another and Oedipus sends Creon to ask the oracle that is the motive of the gods' wrath. The oracle replies that the death of King Laios must be avenged, and Oedipus starts investigating to find the culprit. It turns out to be the killer himself, and terrified of his own deed, as well as the incestuous marriage to Iocasta, is punishable: he takes his eyes alone and sets off as a beggar in a wandering by his daughter Antigona. He is welcomed with hospitality in Attica and dies at Colonus (Cultural BZI 2014).*

The tragic story of Oedipus and his close friends was one of the richest sources of inspiration of Greek poetry and literature of all time, including in the twentieth century – after the appearance of Freud's concept of „Oedipus complex” a leading role in the history of thinking.

## **B. The Psychology of Suffering**

The Spanish philosopher attaches great importance the notion of consolation and self-control, as well as the way a person should be consoling about pain and what principles are used for that purpose: *it is not a great thing to stand strong when everything goes well when life flowing on a good run; it must stand on the contrary to put the soul to the test* (Borch-Jacobsen, 2002).

The wise one urges and advises you with the desire to console you. He is like a psychologist, a very good observer, playing on stage of the theater of life as a spectator. In this sense, all the principles that serve to guide man are born after a fine analysis of life. The way you remember, in a gentle tone, that in affective states, especially when you are in the negative, you have to take into account the role you play in society and in the family before you leave behind feelings and manifestations of any kind. Therefore, you can only be rational in any circumstance of life, either in the face of success or in any kind of loss, in order not to be dominated by the primal instinctual senses. This is how other people can recognize the character of a person.

The consolation method indicated by Seneca to console an important loss in one's life is the question of perspective. The wise man will guide you to forget your own pride and realize that there are many people around you who live a drama like yours and that you should not consider yourself a special

target different from them (Seneca 2004, 28). The real key to helping you successfully overcome an unfortunate situation is to become aware of your own transient human condition, reconciliation with your own death, and the fact that all your existence is leading to an unavoidable end, that time passes quickly, to awaken in you the desire to make the most of life, to enjoy at all times the things that surround you.

In this sense, we should not dwell too much in the „melancholy barrel”, but enjoy life: *carpe diem*; not to be self-indulgent with regard to our conduct even in moments of soul storm, the strength being a virtue belonging only to the characters of the character. Another direction of psychoanalysis appears in the work of the *Consolatio ad Polybium*, where Seneca highlights the importance of accepting our human condition, which implies knowing that time is passing, resulting in the fact that any material inheritance that we would like to leave will be, in the the last, broken: *What eternal thing could the hands of mortals have done? Nothing is everlasting; it takes a long time; everything that begins has an end* (Seneca 2004, 197).

In his conception, this is the cause of pain that has no purpose, because no matter how much I suffer for an unfortunate event, especially the death of a loved one, the weeping, though the poop, will not bring us back, and will only lead to the darkening and shortening of our lives: *we can blame fate, we can not change it*. However, the fact that people are living in a dual world gives them the opportunity to choose what kind of person they can be.

In the paper, *Consolatio ad Marciam*, Seneca presents the experience of two women who have suffered the same suffering, namely the loss of the son, and the opposite way in which each one behaves. The two women lose each son, Livia and Cornelia - one wife and the other sister of Emperor Augustus.

The pain of the two is similar, but their reaction is different: Livia, proving a special and exemplary character, in the opinion of the Stoic philosopher, although it is grieved for a period, it is only as right as it can, detaching from that event and -and continue life. At the other pole is Cornelia, which leaves despair, to a point where it is dedicated to it. This pain, which has become self-imposed, becomes, for the unfortunate soul, a crooked pleasure that affects those around her. The wise man attributes Livia's great appeals to her, and Cornelia can not tell her more because she is the woman who

has pulled out of the living. Following this parable we understand that it is up to us to choose what kind of person we are, even in extreme conditions that disrupt our state of equilibrium.

In *Consolatio ad Polybium*, Seneca puts into question the fact that if you are a known and important person, you will certainly not be able to act like a banal man, or that you will be able to take advantage of the time to comprehend your situation. As a man who has a chosen teaching and has a crossing among intellectuals, by these traits you are more definitely exposed to the critics: *Hard slavery is a great fate* (Seneca 2004, 197).

Being an example to others through your behavior, you are not entitled to show your suffering because you are a pillar of support for the weak, and if you see that you cannot support them then you will fall, and the same thing will happen to the others. When you become a need of others, with glory comes the self-forgetting: *You are not allowed to cry, just to be able to listen too many who are crying* (Seneca 2004, 198).

These tips, based on the principles of Stoic philosophy, are nevertheless stated by an objective person, unaffected by what has happened, which proves that the superiority of the being comes from the self-control of the instincts and primary senses, but especially of reason: *Reason to end tears*. In addition, this wisdom means the ability to enjoy the good parts that remain to you, or as you might say, to see the full part of the cup: *Let us rejoice what is given to us and give it back when it is ours asked for* (Seneca 2004, 199).

Another constructive habit is to forget about suffering through the concern of mind and spirit with activities that require a greater degree of concentration. In this way, do not feel bad anymore: *Turn your face from the ones that torture you to the others that comfort you* (Seneca 2004, 200).

In conclusion, Seneca is a precursor to Freud's psychoanalysis through the Oedipus complex, even if it is only in an incipient form, not in the concrete and detailed form, as the German philosopher puts it.

Consolations are also important in Seneca's vision, and in these two consolations, *Consolatio ad Marciam* and *Consolatio ad Polybium*, the Roman philosopher, suggest that the stoic principles presented above represent his objective vision, while at the same time aiming to relieve the senses and their

pursuit is not only the way to a happier life, but also to a higher ideal, worthy of a superior being, like a man endowed with reason.

## Conclusions

At the end of this paper, we can say that Seneca is a complex thinker that leans towards a Stoic philosophical system, but it also requires many personal directions. As a philosophical thought, he places great emphasis on *practical virtues and morals*, on the phenomenon of knowledge of *human nature* and on the individual, on the discovery of *true reason* and on a *moral and political order* (Grimal 1992, 10).

*Regarding the antithetical relationship between the state and the individual*, the concept of good supreme highlights the virtue whose perfection determines the lack of any value changes of it and consequently there cannot be a hierarchical scale of virtues, there is a permanent equality of self, from which the equality of those who participate in it resides. In this way, individuals are equal (or equaled) by participating in moral life: „virtue is not closed to anyone: it is within reach of all. He does not choose his rank or asset. He is content with the equal man” (Seneca 1935).

Seneca's allegations sensed the break-up of the balance between the state and the individual, the antithetic relationship between the two concepts getting a favorable solution to the latter, even if the state sometimes seeks to establish or impose the preservation of a lost preeminence.

*The idea of a universal state and monarchy as a form of absolute and nature-conscious government* is the apogee of political thinking and the state of philosopher's conception. Monarchy can degenerate into *tyranny*, as happened in the case of the kings of Rome, aristocracy can generate power by groups and circles of selfish interests and turn into *oligarchy*, and democracy can lead to disorder, to *corruption*, to the lack of precise rules, *demagogy* (Dănișor 2011, 40).

We noticed Seneca's legal thinking, from which we could form an idea of the conception of his law. The main aspect from which I started was Seneca's vision of *natural law*; it governs universal laws, being the foundation of morality and justice in its opinion. In this way, according to natural law,

we can say that the main source of law is not the law, but *nature*, so many of the rights conferred on men have been known as natural rights (Murzea 2003, 20). From this natural right derives all the fundamental rights that man can possess, while it is important to consider the essential legal issues that Seneca emphasizes: *freedom and equality / equity*.

It also focuses mainly on the aspect of human dignity, loyalty, and leniency - *the more power you have, the less you need to abuse it* - the lack of anger in the lives of the leaders of society, the prudence and moderation for a balanced and well-balanced life, as well as that of *blessings*, clear signs of an advanced *concept of morality* and practice of human virtues, based on the fact that virtue is based on it.

The practical side of Seneca's stoic philosophy is what gives him independence. Putting the perceptions above the principles, the practical part of morality above the theoretical, the Senecan project of reforming man fully responded to the Roman need of a applied and applicable philosophy (Sârbu 2003, 200).

We realize the complexity of the Roman philosopher's thinking as well as the depth of his concepts of state and law. A political and philosophical man, a talented trainee and a literary scholar, gave rise to divergent opinions, ranging from uncensored admiration to categorical blame; the subject of these controls represents its contradictory contradiction, the striking difference between the thinker, the mistress, the counselor the politician and the politician, the imperial officer, and the pragmatic: *it was Seneca*.

At the same time, Seneca also manifested itself as a witness to his own weaknesses, as he reveals the dialogue about Happy Life. Weaknesses only partially justified by reflections on the *eukairia*. Particularly relevant is Tacit's judgment, which, with a slight irony, presented him as an elegant and accurate witness of the Neronian age: „that man had a charming talent and the literary ear of his time.”

The practical side of Seneca's stoic philosophy is what gives him independence. Putting the perceptions above the principles, the practical part of morality above the theoretical, the Senecan project of reforming man fully responded to the Roman need of a applied and applicable philosophy. His philosophical concept places great emphasis on the idea of the Supreme

Good, on the practical virtues and morals, on the phenomenon of the knowledge of human nature and the individual, on the discovery of the true reason and on a moral and political order.

In addition, his works are true works of practical morality in which he expresses explicitly against the autonomous cultivation of the arts of language, since antiquity, he was perceived, generally, to be primarily a great orator. Epistles to Lucilius are among the most well-known philosophical and educational works of all time. Seneca is a well-known classical Greek antique who tries to come up with a vision in which classical paideia is played in the spirit of the age and environment in which he lived.

Seneca decides against dialectics as it was studied in ancient philosophical schools, but it is not against the dialectics itself, but only against the way, other philosophers conceive it. He uses dialectical notions to the extent that they can be educationally-morally useful. Seneca thinks a man's word is like his way of being. When the expression of an age is a fallen one, it is a decay of the morals of that age.

Seneca is the creator of a philosophical system specific to the Roman world, being introduced into the same philosophical school as Epictet and Marcus Aurelius. The proposed philosophy is, at the same time, the product of the Roman world and is born from the effort to create a vision of the world that makes life possible in the existing social and political context. Seneca has come to be considered a model to be followed by posterity, even the Christian one (Otovescu 2010, 230).

Seneca Morality has been diligently studied throughout the Middle Ages, revealing a moral language that has divergent points with the writing of some authors such as Erasmus in Rotterdam, Shakespeare, Voltaire, or Kant. In the case of these authors, there is clear evidence that they studied Seneca and capitalized on his inheritance. Erasmus wrote the madness of madness in the style of Seneca's writings; Voltaire was inspired by him to conceive *His Cognition*, and the Shakespearean drama is tributary to Seneca's tragedies. Kant, considered some scholars, drew inspiration from Seneca to distinguish between the maxims of private action and general law.

In Seneca's conception of state, what matters is the aspect of the social actor (the common individual) in relation to the state, the idea of universal state, and the monarchy as a form of ideal government.

Regarding the state-individual parallelism, the emphasis is on the rights of the individual who participates in the social life, with the same intrinsic value, in the ratio of equality through participation in moral life. The philosopher introduces the break-up of the balance between the state and the individual, the antithetical relationship between the two concepts obtaining a favorable solution to the latter, even if the state sometimes seeks to establish or impose the preservation of a lost preeminence. The idea of a universal state and monarchy as a form of absolute and nature-conscious government is the apogee of political thinking and the state of philosopher's conception. Another important aspect is the aspect of education that defines the power of a state:

- ✦ For Seneca, education involves the cultivation of virtue;
- ✦ It gives the two aspects of education, both theoretical and practical, equal importance;
- ✦ The theory and practice of virtue are correlated to doctrine of the likeness of divinity (*homoiosis*);
- ✦ The possibility of transforming man into a good or bad deity, depending on the success or failure of the educational process he is going through.

On the other hand, Seneca's legal thinking — from which we could draw a conclusion on his conception of law — takes the forefront of natural law, the one governing universal laws, being the foundation of morality and justice in his opinion. Under natural law, we can say that the main source of justice is not the law, but nature, so many of the rights conferred on people have been known as natural rights.

From this natural right derives all the fundamental rights that man can possess, while it is important to consider the essential legal issues that Seneca emphasizes: freedom and equality / equity.

The equality to which the Roman philosopher relates is not like the equality of the ancient conceptions or the many philosophical concepts that have followed throughout history, not even the one of equality in communism

— valid only to bureaucracy, the paranoia of power transforming anyone into a dictator, having the function: the function creates the value — but an equality derived from nature, from the natural law, having the syntax: the value creates the function.

The key to the virtues and qualities that the monarch or magistrate must possess is dignity, loyalty, clemency — the more power you have, the less you need to abuse it, the lack of anger and aggression, prudence and moderation for a balanced and well-balanced life, as well as benevolence, clear signs of an advanced concept of morality and practice of human virtues, the basis of all of which being measure and balance (Lascu 2005, 22).

There is a clear resemblance between the precepts of the Stoic philosopher and the precepts Christian religion. His ideas made him be consulted not only by philosophers, but by the Fathers of the Christian Church or by many Christian moralists (Rotaru 2005b, 297-316).

Seneca is drawn to faith in Providence and hopes for a better “beyond”, for whom the world here is just a place to prepare. In the face of human misery, it honors virtues such as mercy, gentleness, endless love for people, being cherished by the Fathers of the Christian Church, Tertullian (Christian writer of the second century), not by Seneca noster.

In Seneca's view, the aspect of time passage and human self-examination is extremely important, emphasizing fundamental themes such as the theme of death, the theme of waste of time, the theme of happiness, etc., so that man has to count his years of life well live with meaning and responsibility, overcoming common obstacles: laziness and vice.

Also, as I have shown in the paper, Seneca is a precursor to Freud's psychoanalysis, as well as a true observer of the psychology of human suffering and consoling, which suggests that the stoic principles presented represent his objective vision, to relieve the primary senses, and their pursuit not only represents the way to a happier life, but also to a higher ideal, worthy of a superior being, such as the man endowed with reason.

As a personal remark, I believe that, in order to name the Stoic philosophical specificity, as well as Seneca's state and law conception, it is appropriate to use the Romantic expression (Roman adoration of non-Roman divinities).

Because of this research, I believe that the great philosopher Seneca represents a brilliant thinker of antiquity, with a capacity for philosophical, political and juridical analysis, out of the ordinary, in which state, political or juridical views, although complex in nature, are very well structured and elaborate.

Conclude this work with a deep-grained thought of the Roman philosopher, in which all his conception of society, justice, and human virtue can be understood:

„To be righteous without thinking of any reward.”

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

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