SAPIENZA UNIVERSITÀ EDITRICE
LUCIUS ANNAEUS
SENECA 2 – 2022
pp. 45-80

E-ISSN 2785-2849
DOI: 10.13133/2785-2849/2644

—4—

Ut amare discas: Anticipating Friendship in *Epistulae Morales* 35

Amanda Wilcox

Abstract – Via an intensive close reading of diction and style in *Letter* 35, which strives to take equal notice of the metaphorical context of Seneca's letter collection and the intertextual relationships with texts from other genres that illuminate Seneca's work, as well as its status as a letter, this analysis demonstrates that the fabric of the letter shows an intense economy of meaning akin to a Horatian ode, and proposes a detailed comparison with *Odes* 1.9 as an exercise in how the 'structuring activity' of the reader is an essential contribution to the literary and philosophical functioning of the letter, contributing alongside the progressor and writer 'Seneca' and his addressee 'Lucilius' to constitute all three participants in friendship as selves, lovers, and self-lovers, and to anticipate their transformation into true friends.

Introduction

What we expect to learn from Seneca's letters inevitably colors both what we discover in the text and also what strikes us as lacking. A reader looking for philosophy will find it in the *Moral Epistles*, but trying to sift out Seneca's philosophy to examine it in isolation from other aspects of the text dilutes the richness and subtle power of Seneca's ethical thought, and runs a high risk of missing the point of the letters altogether. A more promising approach begins by granting as much weight to the epistolary and literary aspects of the letters as to their status as philosophical writing. The collection expertly mimics correspondence addressed to

a friend, as most scholars have long concurred,[1] and consequently, we should expect the letters to exhibit 'epistolarity,' to use Altman's widely adopted term (1982). And because they are letters, we expect that these texts contain conventional content, such as inquiries into the addressee's health, as well as formal markers. The letters likewise comment on recent weather and report on local happenings, either at the writer's location or that of the recipient, as well as the doings of mutual acquaintances. They include inside jokes and oblique references to people, events, attitudes and so on that may be difficult for readers beyond Seneca's original milieu to decode. They offer friendly advice, encouragement, and consolation. It is here, in their therapeutic aspect, that we may most clearly see how Seneca exploits the overlapping functions of letters exchanged between literary-minded friends and the eudaimonistic goal of Hellenistic philosophy. Accordingly, it is no surprise that scholarship which has investigated specifically this aspect of the letters has flourished in recent decades. Particularly powerful insights in Seneca's letters have emerged from analyses that examine how the literary, epistolary, and philosophical elements of these texts work together.

Seneca's letters to Lucilius engage not only in therapeutic epistolarity, however, but in other kinds of 'letter-ness' as well, including self-fashioning and dramatization.[2] They also participate, perhaps more surprisingly, in a tradition of erotic epistolography.[3] Looking for love letters in Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* can refresh our awareness of the intimacy and emotional fervor that characterizes Seneca's epistolary friendship with Lucilius. Moreover, this lens can also more sharply focus an evaluation of the beneficiary of Seneca's love. What person, or what kind of person, has engaged Seneca's affections? A factual profile of the historical figure that matches Seneca's addressee is not particularly illuminating,[4]

---

1 See, e.g., Cancik (1967), Maurach (1970), Wilson (1987) and (2001), Henderson (2004), Wilcox (2012); cf. Mollea (2019).

2 See, e.g., Edwards (2015) 41 on the opening of *Ep*. 49; on the letters as 'dramatized education,' see Schafer (2011).

3 Analyses of the *Letters* that are attentive to their erotic dimension are rare but not non-existent; see, e.g., Motto (2007) and on *Letter* 35 specifically, Allegri (2013). I owe many thanks to Professor Francesca Romana Berno, who hosted the conference on Senecan love letters and suggested that I might productively read *Letter* 35 in this way. I am very grateful to Professor Berno, the conference audience, and my fellow speakers for their gracious response to the initial version of this paper, and to the editors of *LAS* and the journal's anonymous referees for patience, encouragement, and excellent suggestions for improvement.

4 For the historical Lucilius, see Griffin (1976) 347-353.

but when we shift our inquiry from the strictly biographical to the characteristic, looking to the letters themselves to tell us what *sort* of person their addressee is, we may make considerable progress. For Seneca, the selection of friends and exercise of friendship are essential elements of a life well-lived[5] and wholly voluntary friendship may well be the most important relationship possible between two people. The high value Seneca assigns to love between friends was not unusual among the Stoics,[6] but Seneca's adaptation of friendship conducted and represented through letters to enact his ethical project of what we might call self-actualization, through the intrinsically entwined love of self and others, is a novel project that he works out explicitly in a number of the letters, as well as implicitly via the collection as a whole. Other letters in the collection also instruct Lucilius in the definition of friendship and how to recognize and cultivate a friend, but *Letter* 35 is unique in characterizing friendship explicitly as love.

This brief letter, which occupies just over twenty-five lines in Reynolds' Oxford edition, relays in highly concentrated form Seneca's thoughts concerning reciprocity, the abolition of boundaries between friends, possession and shared identity, and the central role of self-love in friendship. Crucially, it also addresses the temporal dimension of friendship: human mortality is a stimulus to love. This paper seeks to illuminate and investigate these Senecan claims as they occur, starting with a largely intratextual 'first reading' that moves deliberately through the letter from beginning to end. I will further attempt to show, moreover, that throughout *Letter* 35, we also see Seneca constructing a closely knotted nexus of figurative and allusive diction palpable even at the level of individual words and partaking of various genres and intertexts that further enrich and complicate the letter's meaning and underscore its status as a love letter, albeit in possibly unexpected ways. This interpretive work, which privileges intertextual engagement over sequence, will occupy both the 'pre-reading' and 'second reading' sections below. The 'pre-reading' section prepares for what comes next by identifying in broad terms some of the discursive flavors, or threads, out of which the letter is composed. After this preparatory section and the sequential first reading, I undertake a second reading, which engages at length with one intertext (Horace, *Odes* 1.9) and more briefly

---

5 For the crucial importance to Seneca of selecting friends and cultivating friendship, see Wilcox (2012) 115-130.

6 See, e.g., Schofield (1991), Graver (2007), Reysdam-Schils (2005), Wildberger (2018).

with several others. This is necessarily the article's most idiosyncratic part, because it relies on the sensibility and expertise of a single reader of Seneca, engaging in a single, albeit protracted, encounter with this letter. But as Lowell Edmunds concluded in his study on Roman poetic interpretation, 'The foundation of intertextual phenomena is not the author but the reader (2001, 166)'. I further propose, and endeavor to show below, that interpreting *Letter* 35 in this way, bringing to bear an individual sensibility and expertise, is precisely the sort of loving collaboration that Seneca invites his readers to undertake.

I. A pre-reading, exploring four flavors

The kind of love that Seneca is in and the kind of togetherness he desires both mimic and transcend the kinds of love we find in the genres and texts to which *Letter* 35 makes reference. Seneca's figurative and referential nexus equals in its effects the rapid shifts and surprising juxtapositions associated with satire, but also recalls the compression and intensity of lyric poetry. Other scholars have considered how the prominence of food and eating in Seneca's letters likens them to Roman satire, and recently, both Catherine Edwards and Margaret Graver have demonstrated additional connections specifically to Horatian satire.[7] Francesca Romana Berno (2017), moreover, demonstrates Seneca's interaction with Horace's *Epistulae*. Scholars have less frequently explored in a sustained manner the relationship of Seneca's *Letters* to Horace's *Odes,* though Berthet (1979) is an exception. The 'intense engagement with Augustan literature' that Rimell (2015) 115 avows (an engagement also shown by Ker (2015)), is in tension with her further statement that the *Letters* are 'officially and interestingly 'silent' on [Horace's] *Odes.*' In fact, Rimell productively explores a significant point of contact between Horatian lyric and Seneca's letters. I will build on that work here. In contrast with the relative lack of attention to lyric intertexts, an abundance of recent work demonstrates Seneca's close allusive engagement with Roman epic poetry, including debts to Lucretius and Virgil, Ovid.[8] Rimell's book, however, brilliantly juxtaposes

---

[7] On satire in Seneca, see e.g., Clark/Motto (1990), Motto (2001), Richardson Hay (2009); specifically on Horace, see Edwards (2017) and Graver (2019).

[8] For Virgil in Seneca, see, e.g., Williams (2016), Tutrone (2020), Papaioannou (2020); for Ovid, see e.g., Michalopoulos (2020) and Garani (2020).

the narrow enclosures so characteristic of the *Moral Epistles* to Horace's suggestive lyrical 'corner' (*angulus*) and most especially to the corner in which *Odes* 1.9 ends. Moreover, Rimell (2015) 119 also observes an important similarity in the mode of reading that both Seneca's letters and Horace's *Odes* encourage. She writes that Seneca's *Letter* 12 'sends us round in circles as we contemplate life on a page,' so that the text acts as a means of containment: 'It literally pens us in'. Rimell thus anticipates an important connection that I hope to establish between *Odes* 1.9 and *Letter* 35; that is, both the ode and the letter exhibit and instruct a process of reading and re-reading in circles. In both texts, reading and reading again is an act of self-enclosure. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, in both texts reading and re-reading is also a means of liberating oneself from the constraints of the present moment, a means of living outside the bounds of time. Other points of contact between these texts are also worth our attention, but the paradoxical dynamism of this strong circular movement, whereby the speaker embraces the passage of time in order to elude it or render it harmless, has the most to tell us about the love and self-love that *Letter* 35 encourages and demonstrates.

One important strand we can tease out from the letter's multi-generic nexus, or perhaps better, one flavor note we may distinguish in this Senecan blend, is the apparently Epicurean perspective Seneca enunciates in the letter's first sentence, when he invites the reader to suppose his interest in Lucilius's progress is utilitarian and self-interested (*ago meum negotium*). Building from Hachmann's contention (1995) that the letters in this portion of the collection explore common ground shared by Epicureans and Stoics, Wildberger analyzes Seneca's use of Epicurus to fashion his epistolary persona, and observes that 'the Letter Writer of the early *Epistulae morales* is the living likeness of an Epicurean, [but importantly,] this same Seneca takes care to stress emphatically that he is not at all an Epicurean in his ethics of social relations (2014, 442)'. Certainly, when it suits him, Seneca is capable of deliberately mischaracterizing Epicurean positions, engaging in 'philosophical opportunism,' as Graver (2016) 203 has termed it.[9] Where figurative diction is concerned, Seneca frequently employs financial terminology to suggest

[9] Evenepoel (2014) 49 shows that Seneca is capable of correctly representing an Epicurean position, e.g., that pleasure (*voluptas*) will only be present when virtue (*virtus*) is as well, when he chooses. But elsewhere (Evenepoel (2014) 45), by means of emphasis, Seneca effectually *mis*represents Epicurean pleasure, engaging in the 'philosophical opportunism' Graver (cited in text above) remarks.

and to deflect accusations (including self-accusations) of self-interested action.[10] Seneca marks one such moment here with the word *negotium*. Wildberger's developmental reading of Seneca's selective assimilation of and differentiation from Epicurean stances is especially helpful in making sense of *Letter* 35, where the densely clustered appearance of joy (*gaudium*), pleasure (*voluptas*), and willed happiness (*esse laetus volo*) all demand our careful attention. And Horace's evocation of the remembered past as a resource for present and future pleasure in *Odes* 1.9 provides a valuable analog to the quasi-Epicurean position that we will see Seneca sketch out in this letter.

Fleetingly, at the outset of the letter's second section, Seneca flirts with a conventionally amatory persona. He briefly seems to demand from Lucilius an exclusive relationship (*Festina…ne…didiceris*). In a recent overview of Senecan imagery and metaphor, Mireille Armisen-Marchetti (2015) 152 has singled out *amor* in the *Letters* as an example of a term that might be used without activation of a metaphorical sense, to indicate straightforwardly 'a keen interest, without any reference to an erotic attachment.' But as she observes in the same passage, 'there are many cases in which only the reader's linguistic intuition can decide whether a metaphor is present; doubt is only laid to rest when the metaphorical sense is revitalized by the context.' She illustrates Seneca's exploitation of the erotic sense of *amor* with a sentence from *Letter* 115.6, where the verb *arderet*, which 'participates in the same semantic field,' suffices to show that the erotic aspect of *amor* is active. In *Letter* 35, Seneca's brief but pointed expression of jealousy following on *ut amare discas* is enough to enliven the erotic aspect of *amare*. Here it is worth mentioning Seneca's earlier association of erotic love with friendship in *Letter* 9, which takes up the question of the wise person's participation in friendship. Seneca takes the opportunity to comment there on the relationship between *amicitia* and *amor*: 'No doubt there is something similar to friendship in the state of lovers; you could say that this is insane friendship' (*Non dubie habet aliquid simile amicitiae adfectus amantium; possis dicere illam esse insanam amicitiam*, 9.11). As we will see, however, the brief evocation of the jealous lover in *Letter* 35 is soon undercut, as similarly, in *Letter* 9, Seneca immediately undermines the idea that one could actually *love* profit or ambition or

[10] On Seneca's figurative use of financial terms in connection with maxims credited to Epicurus, see Wilcox (2012) 103-104.

glory. Rather, real love is 'for itself' and 'neglectful of everything else, it kindles minds in the desire to possess beauty, not without hope of mutual care' (*ipse per se amor, omnium aliarum rerum neglegens, animos in cupiditatem formae non sine spe mutuae caritatis accendit*, 9.11).[11]

Roman legal language adds another flavor to *Letter* 35. The letter opens with a playful application of the legal understanding of possession, but this dimension of the verb *habere* may not stand out on a first reading. It emerges more strongly with Seneca's use of *fructus* and *res* in section two. Earlier on, in *Letter* 14, Seneca had already made a similar play on *usus* and *fructus* as the elements of legal possession (Wilcox (2012) 106). In a later letter, as Wildberger (2014) 453 has noted, Seneca alludes to the praetor's edict, and 'thus to the extreme formality of Roman legal language,' as a means of distinguishing his work from the Stoic 'zeal for legalistic precision.'

Another flavor that pervades *Letter* 35 and is frequent throughout the *Moral Epistles* is a humorous and self-deprecating didacticism that is indebted to Horace, both his *Satires* and also the *Odes.* Ker (2015) 113 notes that Seneca rarely quotes from Horace, 'preferring Horatian allusions only,' but Graver (2019) 248 and Henderson (2004) 117 take note of several exceptions, when Seneca does quote directly from Book One of Horace's *Satires* within the *Moral Epistles.* Beyond quotation, Graver (2019) 250 shows that Seneca, like Horace before him, adopts the 'policing function of invective humor' to poke fun at himself and also to violate generic norms for philosophical writing that he has himself established. I do explore what I take to be several points of influence or contact with Horace's *Satires* in what follows, but I am more interested in developing the parallels *Letter* 35 exhibits with Horace's *Odes* 1.9, in spite of the presumptive generic dissimilarity of philosophical prose and lyric. I adverted to Rimell's comments on the Horatian *angulus* and *Letter* 12 above. Here, I will add that *Letter* 35 and *Odes* 1.9 share a capacity for compassing an ambitious theme in an exceedingly brief number of lines. Schafer has noted how Seneca's letters can 'capture precise details of a given instant' and also how the collection overall is able to 'collapse long expanses of time' (2011, 35). *Odes* 1.9 does both within a single poem. I will argue below that *Letter* 35 also plays with time this way, by anticipating the consequences of a perfected friend-

[11] Allegri (2013) 448 quotes this passage from *Letter* 9 in discussing friendship as true love, which has its origin in nature.

ship even as it urges the continuation of progress that is underway. As in the thirty lines of Horace's poem, meaning saturates every word of Seneca's letter, and the meaning of single words is further enriched by juxtaposition, separation, and interwoven word order that, although it is not constrained by meter, is nonetheless very carefully wrought. And as I have already remarked, the movement of *Letter* 35 overall is also similar to that of Horace's poem, in which the closing lines beckon the reader back toward its opening, so that every reading invites a rereading, and both the advice the narrator gives and the pleasure that reading and recollection yield can be infinitely renewed.

Certainly, the threads, or flavors, that I have picked out here are not exhaustive. Analyzing even a single Senecan sentence can at times feel like unpicking a tightly bound knot. Seneca's brevity and allusivity also explain why generic markers in his diction, especially when they are reduced to the metaphorical use of a single term, can easily elude our notice altogether, especially when we are reading quickly, or tracking a single topic or stylistic feature. Bringing one element to the fore naturally has the effect of making other elements recede. When we read a Senecan letter at a regular pace, the cumulative effect is of a mosaic or pixelated illustration viewed at a distance: individual tesserae or dots seem to merge into one another. When we zoom in on individual words, however, we may ascertain better their semantic potential as independent elements and how that potential is active or latent in their context. Of course, the individual reader acts as arbiter here, as Armisen-Marchetti, noted above, has pointed out. And on different occasions, different elements and relations between them may strike a singular reader as more or less important. This is 'the general condition of reading' in Edmunds' words (2001, 157), and it explains how Iser, quoted by Edmunds, can describe the reader herself as 'a textural structure.' I will return to this idea, namely, that the activity of reading summons into existence the reader, as well as the text she reads, in my conclusion. For now, it suffices to say that paying intensive attention to Seneca's diction in *Letter* 35 engages the reader both in a kind of *intra*textual interpretation – namely, a careful assessment of the capacious scope and argumentative force of figurative language within a single letter and in Seneca's whole oeuvre[12] – and that it will

[12] Relevant studies of figurative language in Seneca's work include Armisen-Marchetti (1989), Bartsch (2009), Dressler (2012), and Gazzarri (2020).

also appropriately involve us in intertextual interpretation.[13] Both of these are aspects of the 'structuring activity of the reader,' as Edmunds (2001) 157 puts it, and the outcomes of both processes are bound to be somewhat idiosyncratic, though I hope they will prove persuasive.

II. A sequential reading, from start to finish

Seneca opens *Letter* 35 with an unapologetic assertion of self-interest: 'When I demand so vigorously that you study, I am doing my own business.' (*Cum te tam valde rogo ut studeas, meum negotium ago*, *Ep*. 35.1). He immediately follows up with an expression of desire: 'I want to have a friend, a thing I am not able to obtain for myself, unless you go on as you have begun to cultivate yourself '(*habere amicum volo, quod contingere mihi, nisi pergis ut coepisti excolere te, non potest*). Seneca's business (*negotium*) and also his will (*volo*) aim at acquiring (*contingere*) and possessing (*habere*) a friend. Or, perhaps, with a slightly different emphasis, Seneca's interest lies in '*wanting* to have a friend' (*habere amicus volo*). There is some ambiguity in whether the implied antecedent for *quod* includes 'wanting to have a friend' or only 'having a friend.' For that matter, whether there is a real difference between 'wanting to have' and 'having' awaits to be seen. For now, notice that Seneca follows his bluntly assertive opening with an equally striking admission of incapacity: *Quod contingere mihi, nisi pergis ut coepisti excolere te, non potest*. In other words, Seneca confesses that he wants something for himself that he cannot get for himself. Thus, within the letter's first sentence, Seneca emphatically asserts himself (*rogo, ago, volo*) but equally strongly, he declares his dependence on someone else (*nisi pergis…non potest*). And what is it that Seneca cannot get for himself? Not merely a possession ('friend'), but an activity, 'having a friend.'[14]

A suggestion of physical activity is underscored by the adverb *valde*, contracted from *valide*. Seneca demands in a 'healthy' way that Lucilius engage in vigorous activity, too. He must cultivate (*excolere*) himself. The prefix adds emphasis. Lucilius should not merely 'cultivate,' but work deeply or assiduously on himself. An agricultural sense is possible; Lucilius should develop himself the way a farmer

---

[13] On Senecan intertextuality, see, e.g,. Stöckinger/Winter/Zanker (2017), and Garani/Michaelopoulos/Papaioannou (2020).

[14] On friendship envisioned crucially as an activity, see Marchetti (2021) 290-292.

might improve a plot of land, gradually bringing the soil into more productive condition by working it and feeding it, that is, removing rocks and breaking up heavy clods, and adding amendments such as manure (*OLD* s.v. *excolo* 1). An agricultural sense for *excolere* in *Letter* 35 seems particularly plausible since *Letter* 34 also figures philosophical progress using quasi-agricultural terms (cf. Zainaldin 2019). Seneca likens himself in quick succession to a farmer, a shepherd, and a human nurse or guardian (*si agricola…si pastor…si alumnum suum nemo*), then writes 'I sow you for myself,' or, perhaps, 'I sow you near to me; 'you are my accomplishment' (*Adsero te mihi, meum opus es*, 34.2).[15] A sentence in *Letter* 35 closely parallels this one, but significantly, in the second version, the verb has become an imperative. Whereas Seneca used to be the cultivator of Lucilius, in our letter, Lucilius has become a self-cultivator, and thus Seneca's first-person action is transformed into a request: 'Bring yourself to me, a huge tribute' (*Adfer itaque te mihi, ingens munus*, 35.3). Letter 9 also employs an agricultural figure to talk about friendship, to wit, Seneca writes, the difference between making a friend and having made a friend is like the difference for a farmer between sowing and reaping (*quod interest inter metentem agricolam et serentem, hoc inter eum qui amicum paravit et qui parat*, 9.6). The farmer appears as an exemplary figure even in Seneca's early work. In the *Consolation for Marcia* his quick and practical reaction to crop loss models correct behavior for Marcia in mourning her son. The farmer loses no time in regret, instead focusing his energy on his present circumstances and resources, with an eye to the future (*Marc*. 16.7).

When we read the beginning of *Letter* 35 with an eye toward the formal epistolarity of Seneca's collection, we may be especially attentive to the way Seneca uses his opening to remind his reader of the oscillating exchange between partners that structures letter-writing. On this sort of reading, the first sentence acts primarily as a framing device that reminds us that the letter is indeed a letter, and thus an entry in an account that is perpetually, by design, out of balance – with each

[15] For the significance, both in parallel and possible contrast, in referring to Lucilius as a 'work' (*opus*) in *Letter 34* and a gift or service (*munus*) in *Letter* 35, see Marchetti (2021) 286-290. Marchetti notes (287) that already Aristotle refers to a beneficiary as the *ergon* of his benefactor (*EN* 1168a3-4, also *EE* 1241b1-2). She also raises the possibility (289-290) that with the term *munus* at *Ep.* 35.3, Seneca alludes to an anecdote he had recounted at *Ben.* 1.8.1-2, in which Aeschines presents himself as a *munus* to Socrates. On this anecdote and Seneca's comment at *Ben.* 1.9.1 that Aeschines 'made himself a payment for himself' (*pretium se sui fecit*), see Bellincioni (1986).

partner playing the part now of creditor, now of debtor, depending on who has written and who has received the latest letter (Wilcox (2012) 107). But a reader may also consider the lack of action by Lucilius, whether independent or reciprocating, which the opening suggests. Although Seneca makes requests or demands (*rogo*), he cannot enforce them. We, as did the Romans, presume that friendship depends for its continuation on both action and response, but we also implicitly agree that each friend must participate voluntarily in turn. So, then, the response Lucilius may make to Seneca's urging is out of Seneca's control, though he eagerly anticipates it, and necessarily any response is not recorded by this letter, because the temporality of letters does not accommodate instantaneous action and reaction. Rather, individual letters are entries in a temporal sequence, marked by pauses for transit and delivery. Schafer (2011) writes astutely about this aspect of the suitability of correspondence for Seneca's project. The *Epistulae Morales* 'teach teaching by example,' he observes ((2011) 33), in part because a series of letters between friends 'is like a flip-book' of their relationship, enabling a reader to range easily between the 'temporally static' status of a single letter and perspective or insights that emerge from comparatively longer views, and 'backward and forward comparisons' ((2011) 35). We reasonably may infer that Lucilius does respond to Seneca by the continuance of the correspondence. When Seneca writes again, he does not reprove Lucilius for a failure to respond. And in fact, the next letter in the collection begins, as many do, as if making reply to something Lucilius has written in his own intervening letter to Seneca. In an opening that I will return to below, we see Seneca writing, 'Tell your friend that he should courageously scorn those who scoldingly accuse him of seeking shade and leisure,' (*Amicum tuum hortare ut istos magno animo contemnat qui illum obiurgant quod umbram et otium petierit*, 36.1).

Nevertheless, we might do well to question whether Seneca's loving practice of friendship actually does depend on his friend taking action, or whether it depends instead on Seneca's act of requesting. Perhaps so long as Seneca keeps on asking Lucilius to keep striving as he has begun, then a positive response, that is, Lucilius actually continuing to strive to cultivate himself, either on his own initiative or in response to Seneca's urging, is entirely optional for Seneca's self-improving practice of friendship. This possibility would require a radically different idea of friendship from the reciprocal exchange of

affection that Romans conventionally understood *amicitia* to be.[16] But for Seneca, defamiliarizing and redefining orthodox social categories and practices is standard operating procedure. Likewise, he trains the reader of his letters to follow accumulating hints, in order to gradually reshape an initial puzzle or misapprehension into a surprising but true answer or into a different, more salient question (or set of questions) by the letter's end. In observance of this regular pattern, we will return to the questions suggested by Seneca's opening when we have gathered more clues.

For now, let us move on to the next sentence: 'Right now, you love me, but you are not a friend' (*Nunc enim amas me, amicus non es*, *Ep*. 35.1). This brief declarative sentence is the letter's temptingly baited hook, a pithy riddle dangled before us to provoke a puzzled response. As often, Seneca models a response for his external reader by supplying a mystified reply from Lucilius: 'Huh? Are these things [*amas me* and *amicus*] different from one another?' (*Quid ergo? Haec inter se diversa sunt?*) We may infer that in an ordinary sense, declaring 'you love me' and 'you are my friend' could seem more or less synonymous. But Seneca immediately provides an answer that reinforces the puzzle rather than solving it: 'Not just different, utterly unalike! A friend is someone who loves, but a person who loves is not on that basis a friend. For friendship always profits, but love sometimes even harms' (*immo dissimilia. Qui amicus est amat; qui amat non utique amicus est; itaque amicitia semper prodest, amor aliquando etiam nocet*).[17]

Seneca has set forth an apparent paradox and has supplied very briefly the reason why the two terms in his equation are not interchangeable. Then, he delivers the letter's first instruction, using an imperative verb: *profice*. The very same imperative occurs again near the beginning of section four. The two occurrences of *profice* act as rough brackets delimiting the letter's exhortatory heart, although two additional imperative verbs occur after the second instance of *profice,* as if to demonstrate how hard it is for Seneca to stop teaching once he has begun. This central part of the letter demonstrates the 'vigorous asking' (*valde rogo*) that Seneca alluded to in his opening with a series of

---

[16] For conventional Roman friendship, see, e.g., Brunt (1988), Peachin (2001), Williams (2012). For friendship according to Seneca, see Lana (2001) 19-27 and Marchetti (2021).

[17] Allegri (2013) analyzes Seneca's pointed correction (*immo dissimilia*) of the term used in Lucilius's question (*diversa*).

demands (*profice, festina, adfer, cogita, propera, profice, cura, observa*) that Seneca accompanies with explanations that are highly wrought and dense with meaning.

> *Si nihil aliud, ob hoc profice, ut amare discas. Festina ergo dum mihi proficis, ne istuc alteri didiceris. Ego quidem percipio iam fructum, cum mihi fingo uno nos animo futuros et quidquid aetati meae vigoris abscessit, id ad me ex tua, quamquam non multum abest, rediturum; sed tamen re quoque ipsa esse laetus volo.*
>
> Keep at it for this reason, if for nothing else, so that you may learn to love. Hasten therefore so long as you keep working at it for me, and so you don't learn this lesson for someone else. In fact, I already am reaping a benefit, when I pretend for myself that we will become of one mind and whatever strength has ebbed away from my age, it will return to me from your youth, although not much is absent; but nevertheless, I want to be happy also in the thing itself.

The first sentence of this section distinguishes, implicitly, between an erotic love that can cause harm and true loving, which is the activity of friends. Evoking erotic love in the context of friendship is not out of step with orthodox Stoicism (Graver (2007) 185-189; Schofield (1991)), yet the possessive tone of the next sentence may remind us more of an ordinary elegiac lover than the Stoic sage. But what at first reading appears to be a demand for exclusivity that would be incompatible with the unlimited capacity for friendship we elsewhere find associated with friendship among the wise (Graver (2007) 179) is explained by the next, rather lengthy sentence. It is haste, rather than exclusivity, that is key. If Lucilius progresses too slowly, Seneca may well die before Lucilius learns truly to love, because, as this section tells us, Seneca is the older partner.

Paraphrasing the content of this section is only a preliminary to an adequate analysis, however. When we look again at its diction, we notice a number of words that operate doubly, both in their ordinary sense and also figuratively or as terms of art or technical terms borrowed from separate (but analogous) realms. The word *fructus* may be the most prominent of these. I have translated it as 'benefit,' in keeping with my translation of *prodest* ('friendship always *profits*') above. This sense of *fructum* encourages us to reevaluate the sense of *habere* in section one, above, to activate its sense as the legal possession

of property, a two-part concept consisting in having both an original item, such as the living timber of a tree (*usus*), and also its produce (*fructus*). Of course, as Seneca 'seizes' or 'gathers' (*percipio*) the 'fruit' (*fructus*) of Lucilius' progress, the meaning of *fructus* as agricultural produce is active, too, and brings forward that sense of *percipio*, which I accordingly have translated as 'I reap,' rather than privileging its cognitive and intellectual sense ('I observe, understand'). *Fructus* here may exert a retrospective enlivening effect on the agricultural aspect of *excolere* above, and certainly an agricultural association is also possible here. Although the word *vigor* signifies the mental or physical vitality of persons, rather than plants, the analogy between the ebullient energy of youthful humans and the untrammeled growth of healthy young crops or trees was readily available. In the *Pro Caelio* Cicero declares: *quae studiae…in adulescentia vero tamquam in herbis significant quae virtutis maturitas et quantae frugaes industriae sint futurae* (Cic. *Cael*. 76). Overlapping vocabulary to describe human and horticultural flourishing is visible via the verb *cresco* (s.v. *OLD* 2, e.g., Cato *Agr*. 43.2) when Seneca comments on visiting to his dying friend Aufidius Bassus. He was curious to learn whether the strength of Bassus's mind would fail in tandem with his body (*numquid cum corporis viribus minueretur animi vigor*, 30.13), but found the opposite to be true: '[his mental energy] kept growing' (*qui…crescebat,* 30.13). *Letter* 34 opens with this verb, though now it is Seneca who grows, springs up, and grows hot when he hears of his friend's progress (*Cresco et exulto et… recalesco*, *Ep*. 34.1). Given this context, even the penultimate word of Letter 35's second section, *laetus*, may be seen to participate in agricultural metaphor. We are likely to think of the first line of the *Georgics*, in which Virgil declares he will sing 'what makes the harvests glad (*quid faciat laetas segetes*).' But already in *De Oratore* Cicero had testified to the conventional quality of the phrase, writing: 'Even country dwellers, you know, say "to jewel the vines", "there is luxury in grass," "the harvests are glad"' (*Nam 'gemmare vites,' 'luxuriem esse in herbis,' 'laetas esse segetes' etiam rustici dicunt*, 3.155). Tracking the movement of this metaphor through the sentence, however, we can see that an exchange of roles is in the works. At the outset, Seneca is the farmer, 'reaping' the 'fruit' borne by Lucilius. By the end, Seneca anticipates that *he* will be the 'glad [harvest]' when he takes possession *in reality* (*re quoque ipsa*) of the unanimity with Lucilius that he only imagines (*fingo*) now.

We also should note words that gain emphasis by simple repetition. In addition to *profice…proficis*, this section contains a second occurrence of *volo*, even more closely linking the conclusion of this sentence to the declaration in the letter's opening line: *habere amicum volo.* 'Friend' is held tightly between the conjugated verb and its complementary infinitive, a deliberate embrace that is one of several strikingly interlocked arrangements of words. The first of these is framed by *fingo* and *futuros.* 'We' (*nos*) nestles between *uno* and *animo*, underscoring the achievement of Seneca's contriving: by juxtaposition, his words come close to enacting the unanimity he is able to achieve mentally. This unanimity is the partial possession he already enjoys, merely from urging Lucilius's progress. The second elaborately arranged group of words is *quidquid aetati meae vigoris abscessit,* which a reader may unfold as: *quidquid* 'whatever' *vigoris* 'of strength' *abcessit* 'has receded' *aetati meae* 'from my age.' Notice the central placement of *meae*, however, which takes advantage of Latin word order to rest between age and vigor (although, of course, *vigor* is masculine, so the adjective properly agrees only with *aetas*).

Mihi is also underscored by repetition: it occurs once in the opening section (*quod contingere mihi…non potest*) and twice here. The first occurrence, in section one, confesses Seneca's incapacity, and the second instance underscores Seneca's anticipation of benefit from Lucilius's progress. The third instance, here, marks an action Seneca does for himself: *mihi fingo*. Both Seneca's assertion of self-sufficiency and its possible qualification, by way of the verb *fingo*, are important. On the one hand, Seneca is able to fashion an imagined unanimity, even a co-identity, with Lucilius all on his own, without any actual, verifiable action on the part of his friend. On the other hand, this is a mental feat, not a physical manifestation of a double or half-and-half creature actually composed from the melding of two people. *Fingo* is a powerful verb, however. On the force of this verb alone, as I will argue below, we should recognize Seneca conveying an act that is no mere fantasizing, but an actual *making.* As for understanding unanimity as co-identity, sharing one mind between two people could be another way to express that a friend is an *alter ego*, a formulation that we find among Seneca's Roman models in Cicero's *De Amicitia* (23, 80), where Cicero has borrowed the notion from Aristotle (*EN* 9.1166a, 1170b6). As Margaret Graver (2017) 181 has noted, Zeno is said to have replied in this way, too, when asked what is a friend (Diog. Laert. 7.23). By Seneca's

time, she remarks, the idea of a friend as 'another I' was proverbial. We should take seriously Graver's speculation that Zeno may have intended the notion to be taken literally, as a way of saying that true friendship 'actually expands the sphere of what is integral to oneself.' Regardless of whether Zeno took that position, there is good reason to think that Seneca may have entertained it. Certainly the final clause of this section is suggestive: *sed tamen re quoque ipsa esse laetus volo*. The repetition of *volo* in final position is a strong closural gesture, and the phrase *res ipsa* has a quasi-legal flavor that is underscored by the interrupting *quoque*. To capture this aspect of *res ipsa,* we might translate thus: 'Nevertheless I want to be glad, like a field ready for harvest, *in full possession* of your energy.'

On its initial occurrence in the *Epistulae Morales,* in *Letter* 2, Seneca links the adjective *laetus* with Epicurus.[18] He offers Lucilius the Epicurean saying, 'An honorable possession is happy poverty' (*'honesta' inquit 'res est laeta paupertas, Ep*. 2.6), then instantly emends it: 'In fact, this is not poverty, if it is happy.' In *Letter* 23, where Seneca takes some pains to distinguish between 'joy' (*gaudium)* and 'pleasure' (*voluptas*), he asserts that unfailing happiness (*laetitia)* is secured through joy. 'I want for happiness to never be absent from you,' he writes. 'I want for it to be born for you at home. It is born there if only it happens within you' (*nolo tibi umquam deesse laetitiam. Volo illam tibi domi nasci: nascitur si modo intra te ipsum fit, Ep.* 23.3). Intriguingly, the happy possession of 'fruits' borne by Lucilius that Seneca anticipates in section two of *Letter* 35 is quickly followed by both *gaudium* and *voluptas*:

> *Venit ad nos ex iis quos amamus etiam absentibus gaudium, sed id leve et evanidum: conspectus et praesentia et conversatio habet aliquid vivae voluptatis, utique si non tantum quem velis sed qualem velis videas. Adfer itaque te mihi, ingens munus, et quo magis instes, cogita te mortalem esse, me senem. Propera ad me, sed ad te prius. Profice et ante omnia hoc cura, ut constes tibi.*

These lines present a puzzle, as Seneca deliberately uses two philosophically significant terms, *gaudium* and *voluptas*, in quick succession and in a way that defies readerly expectations for how we expect a Stoic to use them. I will translate first, and then comment:

---

[18] See Graver (2019) 254-256 on Seneca's portrayal of himself as 'the pilferer in the Garden' of Epicurus.

> Joy comes to us from those whom we love, even when absent, but it is light and fleeting. Sight and presence and conversation have something of living pleasure, especially if we see not only the one whom we want to see, but we see him such as we want him to be. Offer yourself, accordingly, to me, a huge gift, and so that you will press on all the more, think that you are a mortal, and I am an old man. Hurry to me, but beforehand to yourself. Keep on and take care for this above all else, that you agree with yourself.

Before we turn to the nouns, I want to draw attention to the verbs here. At the opening of the letter, the verbs in first person showed robust self-assertion on Seneca's part (*rogo, volo, ago*). At the beginning of section two, there is a deliberate pairing of second-person forms – *profice* with *proficis*, *discas* with *didiceris.* Starting from that first instance of *profice,* followed closely by *festina,* the middle of the letter is full of imperatives. In this passage *adfer*, *cogita*, *propera*, *profice*, *cura* occur in rapid succession, followed in the next sentence by the letter's last imperative *observa*. The sheer number of imperatives contributes to a sense of urgency and intensity, and it is interesting that verbs indicating energetic intellectual action (*cogita, cura, observa*) alternate with those that may indicate either physical or mental action. Giuseppina Allegri (2013) 450-451 remarks, moreover, that the two occurrences of *profice* introduce instructions (*ut amare discas…ut constes tibi*) that on first reading appear to be distinct, but, upon closer consideration, may be essentially equivalent to one another, or mutually constituitive of one another. When Lucilius works at learning how to love, he is also working at becoming internally consistent, or agreeing with himself, and vice versa.

On the basis of the verbs alone, it would be hard to say whether Seneca is requesting an actual visit from his friend or not. The list of nouns that bring pleasure, *conspectus et praesentia et conversatio*, are likely to remind us of *Letter* 6, in which Seneca responds to a request for books with a dinner invitation (*Plus tamen tibi et viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit; in rem praesentem venias oportet*, *Ep*. 6.5). That letter declares the importance for both the Stoics and the Academics of looking to a teacher's life as a model for one's own, but only the Epicureans are credited with actually living alongside their teacher: *Metrodorum et Hermarchum et Polyaenum magnos viros non schola Epicuri sed contubernium fecit* (6.6). The phrase 'something of living pleasure' at *Letter* 35.3 seems designed to evoke the contented cohabitation of Epicureans.

But while we might expect pleasures of the table or bed to be characterized as light and fleeting, it is surprising to see joy characterized this way. True joy is consistently represented as a serious thing (*verum gaudium res severa est, Ep*. 23.4) and once a Stoic wise person has attained it, he enjoys uninterrupted calm well-being (*Ep*. 72.4, with the discussion of Graver (2007) 53). It is hard to understand how true joy could be unironically described as fleeting. Seneca seems to have transferred the adjectives (*levis, evanidus*) by which an author hostile to Epicureanism would describe the Epicurean's 'mere' *pleasure* (*voluptas*) in friendship to the Stoic word for durable happiness, that is, *gaudium*. This maneuver creates dissonance, and prompts us to pause and assess. What sort of Stoics experience joy 'from those we love, even when they are absent' but joy that is 'light and fleeting'? The obvious answer seems likely to be the correct one: *proficientes*, that is, people who are aspiring to become wise, but are not there yet. And thus the plurals here (*ad nos…amamus*) are not conventional but actual, referring to the writer and his addressee and to any reader who is not yet a wise person. The fleeting glimpse of joy that we are already able to enjoy when we call our absent friends to mind is only a foretaste of the steady, full joy that a perfected imagination, that is, the mind of the wise person, could experience. Their recollection of an absent person would be as much a 'living pleasure' as actual presence; in fact, it would be the mental equivalent of co-presence. Seneca uses the term *voluptas* again at the beginning of *Letter* 59 to express his 'lifting up of the mind' (*elatio animus*, 59.1) on receiving a letter from Lucilius. There, he explicitly draws a distinction between the meaning in ordinary speech of 'pleasure' and its technical philosophical sense.[19]

Seneca began an earlier letter by telling Lucilius that he realizes that his progress in philosophy is 'not only correcting, but transforming me' (*intellego, Lucili, non emendari me tantum se transfigurari, Ep*. 6.1), and in the same letter, he expresses his desires for Lucilius. First, 'I wish…I could share with you my sudden change' (*Cuperem…tecum communicare tam subitem mutationem mei*, 6.2) and later, 'I want to pour all [my learning] into you, and I rejoice to teach something in this way, so that I may learn' (*Ego vero omnia in te cupio transfundere, et in hoc aliquid gaudeo*

[19] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to Seneca's discussion of *voluptas* and *gaudium* in *Ep*. 59.1-3. For Seneca's use elsewhere of *vera voluptas* to refer to intellectual rather than sensual pleasures, see Evenepoel (2014).

discere, ut doceam, 6.4). To share his 'sudden transformation' with Lucilius would require an escape from the constraints of time and space, constraints that are underscored by the epistolary form. It would require not only an extraordinary imaginative leap, but also a sure-footed landing. If Seneca *were* able to do this, he writes, 'I would begin to have surer confidence in our friendship; that it would be of the true kind that neither hope nor fear nor care for its own usefulness can tear away, of the kind that people take to their death, the kind for which they face death' (*tunc amicitiae nostrae certiorem fiduciam habere coepissem, illius verae quam non spes, non timor, non utilitatis suae cura divellit, illius cum qua homines moriuntur, pro qua moriuntur*, 6.2). At the end of *Letter* 55, however, in a concluding passage that has drawn considerable attention,[20] Seneca embraces the radical position: 'A friend should be possessed by the intellect; moreover, he is never absent: the mind sees whomever it wishes daily…We are living in a narrow place, if anything is closed off from our thoughts' (*Amicus animo possidendus est; hic autem numquam abest; quemcumque vult cotidie videt…in angusto vivebamus, si quicquam esset cogitationibus clusum*, 55.11). Now, not even letters are required to bridge the distance between friends; the mind alone is capable of bringing them together.

Letter 35 does not make this claim explicitly, but the power of the *animus* to vault across apparent barriers, achieving true unanimity even when the friends' bodies remain far away from one another, may be what Seneca is getting at, elliptically, in the opening sentence of section four: 'Hasten to me, but first to yourself' (*Propera ad me sed ad te prius*, 35.4). Lucilius might conceivably hurry literally to Seneca's house, but hustling off *to himself* must be a movement of his mind, rather than his feet. And it may be that when his mind has carried him home to himself, he will find his mental image of Seneca, which is the truest version of his friend, is already there. Seneca's three exclamatory imperatives in the passage from *Letter* 55 – 'study with me, dine with me, walk with me' (*mecum stude, mecum cena, mecum ambula*, 55.11) – correspond to the trio of 'living pleasures' of companionship listed in *Letter* 35.3 (*conspectus et praesentia et conversatio*) but the last clause of that sentence confirms that the perfect version of companionship is with the truest, best version of a friend, the one that we hold in our mind: 'especially

[20] On the conclusion of *Ep*. 55, see, e.g., Henderson (2004) 144-145; Wilcox (2012) 140-141.

if not *so much* as you wish as *such a one* as you wish, you see' (*utique si non tantum quem velis sed qualem velis videas*, 35.3). A friend sees us in our best light, and by reflecting back to us an ideal version of ourselves, helps us become better. Their concept of us models what we might become. Glimpsing their version of what we could be, we are inspired to make the ideal version that they possess and show us into the real one.

Seneca's exhortations to 'hasten to yourself' (*propera…ad te*) and 'take care to be consistent with yourself' (*cura ut constes tibi*) at *Letter* 35.4 necessarily refer to mental actions. The demands that Seneca is making for progress toward unanimity will be carried out in the mind's eye, rather than on a shared dining couch. But even as we arrive at this most abstract and metaphysically challenging portion of the letter, Seneca explains the urgency of his instructions in terms of the familiar didactic partnership of an older and younger man: *Cogita te mortalem esse, me senem*. With characteristic Senecan brevity, the parallel clauses each give a reason why Lucilius should make haste in his study of love. Each reason is independently valid, but the second clause adds urgency to the commonplace acknowledgment of uncertainty expressed by the first. Nevertheless, it may be useful to pause over the first admonition, 'consider that you are mortal.' This reminder occurs frequently in consolatory letters and discourse (e.g. Cic. *Fam*. 5.16.2, *Tusc.* 3.30), including those of Seneca. For instance, in *Letter* 63.15, as here, Seneca makes a connection between the idea of shared mortality and age. In the later letter, however, Seneca recounts what he should have done, but had not, in order to meet the death of his younger friend Serenus with equanimity (*Tunc ego debui dicere, 'minor est Serenus meus: quid ad rem pertinent? Post me mori debet, sed ante me potest*').[21] In *Letter* 35, too, Seneca is the senior partner in age, but instead of instructing his reader through a comparatively leisurely demonstration of reflective self-talk, followed by mutual exhortation (*Cogitemus ergo, Lucili carissime*, 63.16), Seneca here opts for a command. The contrast of his interlocutor's youth to his own age is a move that Seneca often makes in the letters, but of course it occurs frequently in other authors and genres, as well, and here it has the effect of domesticating the starkness of Seneca's demand by couching it in terms that have deep, multivalent cultural resonance. Roman literature is full of old men giving younger men advice. The

[21] See Lana (2001) 22 on the friendship between Seneca and Serenus as an example for Lucilius.

trope is so widespread, in fact, that *me [esse] senem* even risks seeming mundane. But nothing in this letter is gratuitous. On the contrary, the reminder of these partners' ages relative to one another illuminates further what kind of love letter we are reading. The *senex* Seneca loves Lucilius as a father loves a son, which could equally suggest the elevated pathos of Aeneas' last embrace of Ascanius (*A*. 12.433-440), and the deluded oscillation between severity and overindulgence explored in Terence's *Adelphoe.*

As Graver (2007) 186 has argued, the Stoic definition of love seems 'designed to preserve a recognizable relation between the philosophical notion of *eros* and the assumptions which prevailed in the surrounding culture.' She quotes from Stobaeus, further, that 'it is [the Stoic] doctrine that the wise person behaves not only in the manner of a thoughtful and philosophical person, but also in the manner of a convivial and erotic one (Graver (2007) 186).' *Me senem* resonates with ancient Athenian practice, in which a substantial age gap between partners was expected. But in Roman culture, too, a range of homosocial attachments between men, including both self-consciously philosophical and non-philosophical friendships, could be characterized as *amor* and would be expected to include 'hearty, bodily expression[s] of affection' (Williams (2012) 139). Both Seneca's brevity and his intensively intertextual diction ensure that neither the Greek Stoic definition nor Roman cultural expectation excludes the other.

Moreover, *me senem* evokes additionally the dutiful love, if not necessarily the fervent affection, that a son owes his father. Although Seneca steadily occupies the senior role in his correspondence with Lucilius, we catch a brief glimpse of him as a grateful son in *Letter* 78, when he uses his own past behavior as an example. Tormented by illness, he writes that he was tempted to end his life, but the old age of his 'most fond' father held him back (*patris me indulgentissimi senectus retinuit*, *Ep*. 78.2). We might also compare the younger Marcus Cicero's effusive affection for his father's secretary Tiro (*mi dulcissime Tiro*, *Fam*. 16.21.2) and his description of his relationship with his philosophy teacher in Athens: 'Know that I am connected with Cratippus not so much like a pupil as like a son…I am with him all day and oftentimes part of the night; for I ask him to dine with me as often as possible' (*Cratippo me scito non ut discipulum sed ut filium esse coniunctissimum. … sum totos dies cum eo noctisque saepe numero partem; exoro enim ut mecum quam saepissime cenet*. *Fam.* 16.37.3).

In the last section of *Letter* 35, where Seneca gives some practical advice for how Lucilius can tell if he is making progress, he also introduces a new metaphor. But this new figurative language participates equally in the generic intertextuality that characterizes the rest of the letter, as well as exhibiting the same intricately woven style. In considering this final section, I will show how stylistic elements and blended reminiscences of both Horatian and Epicurean imagery combine and reinforce one another, and direct the reader back to letter's beginning. First, here are the letter's closing lines:

> *Quotiens experiri voles an aliquid actum sit, observa an eadem hodie velis quae heri: 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. Quid ergo interest? hic commovetur quidem, non tamen transit, sed suo loco nutat; ille ne commovetur quidem. Vale.*
>
> As often as you want to find out whether anything has been achieved, observe whether you want the same things today that you wanted yesterday: a change in will indicates that your mind is floating, bobbing up now here and now there, as though the wind carries it. Something that is fixed in place and well-established does not wander. The entirely wise person attains this, and in some measure also the person who is making progress and has advanced. What, then, is the difference between them? The *proficiens* is moved, certainly, nevertheless, he does not travel, but nods in place. The wise person is not even moved. Farewell.

First, notice that verbs from the beginning of the letter are prominent in its final lines as well. But the first-person verbs from the letter's beginning (*ago*, *volo*) now occur in the second person (*voles, velis*), and *ago* has become *actum sit.* Separated from the letter's opening by the middle passage full of imperatives, the closing section transfers agency, if he wills it, to the reader. The image Seneca sketches in these lines, of an intellect floating on the waves, moved by the wind, is dominated by air and water, the elements most resistant to maintaining defined limits, or most able to escape them. It is fitting, then, that these lines feature striking instances of elision, minimizing boundaries between individual words to meld phrases into single sonic units, to wit: *aliub[i] atqu[e] aliub[i] apparere; fix[um]atque fundatu[m e]st.* And the passage is also threaded together by strong alliteration. *Voles, velis,* and

voluntatis are semantically linked, of course, but alliteration extends the thread sonically through *ventus, vagatur,* and *provectoque.* The last word in this sequence is also the last occurrence of the prefix *pro-* in the letter. Its prominence in this section alone is notable, but when we look back to the letter's beginning, we see that it occurred frequently there, as well. Interestingly, in both the opening sequence and the final section, the frequent use of *pro-* is interrupted by instances of another prefix, *per-*. So, in sections one and two; *pergis, prodest, profice, proficis, percipio*; and in section four: *propera, profice, prout, perfecto, proficienti, provectoque*. The last word in the sequence neatly ties together the string of prefixes (*pro-* and *per-*) and the alliterative string of 'v' sounds. The person aspiring to wisdom (*proficiens*), who has achieved stability of will (*voluntas*) is no longer merely floating aimlessly, driven here and there by the wind. This person may be carried forward and back on the waves, but moves from a fixed anchorage. Only the wise person, however, stays steadfastly in place.

This passage suggests a spectrum of progress from utter foolishness to perfect wisdom, but it marks out three specific positions on that arc. The first image depicts a mind that has not achieved consistency in what it wants. This is the intellect that floats about, now here and now there, entirely at the mercy of appetite and circumstance (*animum natare, aliubi atque aliubi apparere, prout tulit ventus*). By contrast, the person in the second position does not wander, because their will is fixed in place. The words that express the movement of these progressors indicates vertical motion, up and down, as though treading water. They will be moved (*provectoque, commovetur*) by the swell, but they are no longer traversing (*transit*). Rather, their movement suggests graceful acquiescence to the movements of sea and sky, as they bob up and down in place (*suo loco nutat*). *Letter* 35 creates a contrast between the striving that the letter-writer urges on his friend in the early part of the letter (*pergis, profice*) and the easy motion (*nutat in suo*) of the advanced progressor. Seneca does not describe the controlled exertion below the water's surface that may be required for the advanced swimmer to stay in one place. Likewise, the perfect immobility that characterizes the wise is not described, only asserted. The movement of the letter overall, then, is from vigorous self-assertion and urgent exhortation, hastening motion forward, to a relaxed image not of inertia or immobility, but easeful, gently controlled motion in place.

III. An intertextual reading: remembering, moving, making, leaping

The movement of *Letter* 35 overall can be helpfully compared to that of *Odes* 1.9. In the first stanza of Horace's poem, the speaker observes laborious immobility in nature, a stillness that is the consequence of opposed forces balanced in tension: tree limbs straining, the river frozen stiff. Much of the speaker's advice in stanzas two through four aims at creating easeful movement. Stiffness, whether caused by cold or old age, can be alleviated by restoring motion, creating physical and mental warmth. At *Odes* 1.9.17, Horace evokes both winter's bitter cold and its effect on an elderly body, but the juxtaposition of 'greening' (*virenti*) youth to 'white' (*canities*) old age suggests that both partners, old and young, are mellowed by their conversational exchange, similar to the inflow of youthful vigor that Seneca anticipates for himself as a consequence of witnessing the progress of Lucilius.[22] As the speaker in Horace's poem advises his companion to acquiesce in enjoying youthful opportunities for pleasure (*nec…sperne*), his vivid description of those pleasures illustrates the resource that they now provide him in old age. The speaker of *Odes* 1.9 peerlessly demonstrates that 'a recollected past pleasure is, at the same time, an occurrent present mental pleasure.' This is Wildberger's (2014) 447 distillation of the Epicurean value placed on gratitude, that is, 'the art of deriving pleasure from one's past experiences.'[23] Wildberger argues that for Epicurus 'gratitude appears as a rejuvenating force and lack of memory as an aging factor' and she quotes from the *Letter to Menoeceus*: 'while growing old, [the student of philosophy] remains young in goods through gratitude for what has happened (*Ep. Ad Men*. 122).'

When we turn back to *Letter* 35, we see that Seneca's text concludes with immobility, rather than beginning there, but also that it ends with ease rather than tension. The skillful swimmer stays still by means of quiet, controlled exertion, achieving a balance of opposing forces that is joyful rather than painful labor. But it is the letter's middle portion,

---

[22] Specifically at *Ep.* 35.2: *mihi fingo uno nos animo futuros et quidquid aetati meae vigoris abscessit, id ad me ex tua, quamquam non multum abest, rediturum.* Seneca comments on the chill of old age at *Ep.* 67.1.

[23] Evenepoel (2014) 51-52 shows that Seneca is alert to the distinction Epicurus makes between 'spiritual enjoyment,' which may 'consist in the memory of past physical pleasure' and simple physical pleasures.

in which Seneca explains his motivation for demanding his partner's progress and explains how he benefits from it, that benefits most from a comparison to the dynamics of Horace's advice in *Odes* 1.9. And this comparison also sheds light on Seneca's engagement with Epicureanism in the deliberative middle portion of the letter, in which he asserts that 'joy comes to us from those we love even when they are absent.' By placing the verb *venit* first in this clause, and the subject *gaudium* last, Seneca emphasizes motion. But joy does not arrive of its own accord, but because we are working (*rogo, ago, volo, pergis*, etc.) to achieve the strength of mind that will enable our minds to achieve full unanimity with our friends at will. By contrast, the Epicurean-leaning speaker of the ode urges physical actions on his addressee (*dissolve frigus, deprome merum*, lines 5-8) to promote sensory comfort first, and this easy physical state is a preliminary to the further advice he offers, to taking the mental action of relinquishing the illusion of control (*permitte divis cetera*, line 9) over natural events, including, most importantly, the passage of time (lines 13-18). The value that Seneca seems briefly to place on actual, physical engagement with a friend in section three (*conspectus et praesentia et conversatio*), characterizing it in Epicurean terms as 'something of living pleasure' (*aliquid vivae voluptatis*), turns out to be a mirage unless it takes place inside the mind. The speaker of *Odes* 1.9 abandons imperative verbs after his third stanza (*nec…sperne*, at 1.9.15-16 is the last), but in Seneca's letter, they return in full force, with *adfer, cogita, propera* each first in its clause, in quick succession. A delightful irony, of course, which I take as good reason for reading Seneca reading Horace with humorous sympathy, rather than simple hostility, is that Horace's evocation of youthful flirtation at night on the Campus Martius, homing in a beguiling moment of fleeting pleasure in a corner that is enticingly both open and closed, is itself a masterly demonstration of how the mind's eye can abrogate distance, both in space and time. For the speaker of Horace's ode, memory skillfully employed is the resource that mitigates the bite of old age (*canities…morosa*, 1.9.17-18), whereas for Seneca, although the external sight of a younger ward may inspire beneficial self-reflection in his guardian (*alumnum suum nemo aliter intuetur quam ut adulescentiam illius suam iudicet*, *Ep*. 34.1), the only necessary means for conquering time or distance is our will. He tells his addressee to 'observe whether you wish for the same thing today as yesterday' (*observa an eadem hodie velis quae heri*, 35.4) because always wanting the same thing is how the Stoic wise person overpowers time.

Admittedly, my comparison Letter 35 to *Odes* 1.9 may be felt to be a particularly audacious application of readerly 'structuring activity,' the intertextual relations that are not so much *discovered* by a reader's apprehension of a 'possible world'(Edmunds (2001) 163) as actively created. But there is also a less mediated intertext operating at the end of *Letter* 35, from the Epicurean sayings of the Vatican collection (17). Here is Inwood and Gerson's translation: '[T]he young man at the full peak of his powers wanders senselessly, owing to chance. But the old man has let down anchor in old age as though in a harbor.' This reference meshes well with the Epicurean passages on gratitude that Wildberger (2014) highlights, but it also takes us back to Horace, and a very Roman sort of love between father and son. In a well-known passage of *Satires* 1.4 Horace credits his father with forming a mode of moral self-monitoring he continues to practice: 'My best of fathers instilled this in me, by marking out examples of failings that I should avoid' (*insuevit pater optimus hoc me, ut fugerem exemplis vitiorum quaeque notando, Sat*.1.4.105-106). Less frequently remarked are the concluding words of this passage, in which Horace quotes his father using a metaphor drawn from swimming lessons: 'As soon as age has hardened your limbs and your mind, you will swim without cork' (*simul ac duraverit aetas membra animumque tuum, nabis sine cortice*. (*Sat*. 1.4.119-120). The beginning swimmer is stabilized by a flotation device to boost his buoyancy. The more advanced swimmer can stay in place by means of the body's strongly-developed strong core.

As I bring this reading of Letter 35 back to harbor, it is helpful to turn to A. A. Long's examination of the *Letters*' continuing appeal, which appeared as the introductory chapter of the collection entitled *Seneca and the Self* (Bartsch/Wray 2009). There, Long writes that in the *Moral Epistles*, 'we intuitively recognize ourselves in the gap that they share and set before us between our [actual] and [aspirational] selves,' that is, 'the gap between what we are and what we would like to be ((2009) 36).' Recently Gareth Williams (2016) 189 has alluded to Long's insight with a proposed supplement to it – namely, that the 'sublimity' of the wise man, his capacity for not so much 'minding the gap' as vaulting it, thus bringing the occurrent and normative self into a complete union, is the aspiration Seneca prescribes. Rimell (2015) 115 similarly points to Seneca's language of enclosure and dramatic vertical escape: 'We can leap up to heaven from a narrow spot' (*subsilire in caelum ex angulo licet*, *Ep*. 31.11). Immediately following this assertion, Seneca

enfolds a Vergilian quotation into the intensively hortatory conclusion of *Letter* 31 (note the trio of imperative verbs *exsurge*, *finge*, *cogita*), and as he does so, he moves with lightning speed from the lofty heights of epic back down to earth, rounding off the letter with a homely nod to the 'good old days':

> *Exsurge modo 'et te quoque dignum/finge deo.' Finges autem non auro vel argento: non potest ex hac materia imago deo exprimi similis; cogita illos, cum propitii essent, fictiles fuisse. Vale.*
>
> Rise up, now, 'and fashion yourself worthy of a god.' But you will not work in gold or silver—a divine likeness cannot be sculpted from this material. Think about how the gods, when they were favorable, were made of clay. Be well.

The quotation from Aeneas's visit to Evander in *Aeneid* 8 (lines 364-365) clearly shows Seneca using a quotation '[to] smuggle in key heuristic devices [and] ideas,' (Ker (2015) 114). Indeed, there is much we could unpack here, including the easy association of Seneca and Lucilius to the Evander and his guest-pupil Aeneas, and the parallel between Evander's full advice to Aeneas (*aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum/finge deo*, 8.364-5) and between the conspicuously humble dwelling that shelters them both (*dixit, et angusti subter fastigia tecti/ingentem Aenean duxit*, 8.366-67) and Seneca's evocation of archaic images of gods made out of clay. Evander exemplifies the *honesta paupertas* of *Letter* 2.6 that Seneca denies to be poverty at all. But for our present purposes, I want to underscore the way that Seneca's urging in *Letter* 31 to 'fashion' (*finge, finges*) oneself sets up the use of this verb in Letter 35: *fingo mihi*. The writing of the letter is the act of fashioning that Seneca performs *for himself*, and moreover, that fashioning accomplishes a virtual unanimity that permits Seneca to converse with Lucilius as if with himself, fulfilling the test of true friendship that he elaborated in *Letter* 3.2-3:

> *tam audaciter cum illo loquere quam tecum…cum amico omnes curas, omnes cogitationes tuas misce…Quid est quare ego ulla verba coram amico meo retraham? Quid est quare me coram illo non putem solum?*
>
> Speak as boldly with him as with yourself…mingle all your cares, all your thoughts with your friend. What reason is there for me to hold back any utterances in the presence of my friend? Why should I, when I am with him, not think myself alone?

So Seneca's letter-writing to Lucilius both represents and performs the action of friendship internally, for Seneca. When we focus on the resulting texts, the collection of letters, we will notice that this version of friendship can very literally create actual produce (*fructus*), a harvest that is then available to successive generations of readers as a means of practicing friendship continuously, overpowering or eluding the passage of time.[24] But if we shift our focus from the textual practice of friendship to Epicurean *contubernium*, the shared life of friends that is praised in *Letter* 6, we encounter a scenario in which two or more friends constantly engage with one another, face to face. In this case, no written record – no love-letters expressing desire or demanding progress – would necessarily be produced, though probably friends such as these would act as exemplars for those in their circle, and their virtuous behavior would inspire both emulation and commemoration, such as Seneca's affectionate tribute to his Epicurean friend Aufidius Bassus (*Letter* 30). In fact, Horace represents even conviviality that does not deliberately aim at doing philosophy as naturally productive of ethical conversation. In *Satire* 2.6, just before his neighbor Cervius launches into the fable of the city and the country mouse, the speaker characterizes the sort of conversation (*sermo*) that arises over a leisurely meal (*Sat*. 2.6.72-76):

quod magis ad nos

pertinent et nescire malum est, agitamus: utrumne
divitiis homines an sint virtute beati;
quidve ad amicitias, usus rectumne, trahat nos;
et quae sit natura boni summumque quid eius.

What matters more to us, and is a misfortune not to know, we stir up: whether riches or virtue make people happy; or what draws us to friendship, utility or uprightness; and what is the nature of the good, and what is its highest form.

As in *Odes* 1.9, here Horace represents the achievement of some measure of physical comfort as a preliminary to addressing abstract

[24] On the letters as a means of transferring the activity of friendship into a purely textual realm, thus rendering it impervious to time's passing, see, e.g., Wilcox (2012) 147 and Edwards (2018) 327. As an alternative or complement to correspondence, a person becoming a friend to himself might produce writings of admonishment and encouragement entirely for their own benefit. Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*, whose manuscript title is simply 'To Himself,' is attractive as an actual example of this kind of production, as Long (2009) 29 also notes.

matters. And presumably, under ordinary circumstances, leisurely conversations such as these would leave no written records. It is interesting that the perfect self-sufficiency which characterizes the wise person's internal exercise of friendship shares one feature with friendship conducted in person among the non-wise, that is, the likelihood that it will not have tangible products. As an object of contemplation, however, it certainly stimulates Seneca to think and to write. *Letter* 9 discusses the participation of the wise person in friendship at some length (*Ep.* 9.15):

> *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.*
>
> Therefore, although he is content with himself, he does have a use for friends;[25] he desires to have as many of these as possible, not so that he may live happily; for he will live happily even without friends. The highest good does not seek instruments outside itself; it cultivates [itself] at home, and exists wholly from itself. It begins to be under the yoke of fortune if it seeks any part of itself outdoors.

The country mouse learns a not dissimilar lesson about the danger of seeking the good life away from home in *Satire* 2.6.: "This life is not at all of use to me" he said, "and so fare well! The woods and cave, safe from snares, will console me with slender vetch.' But what the mouse learns through hard-won experience, the dinner guest or even Horace's reader seems unlikely to take deeply to heart at first exposure. According to Seneca, 'the living voice and living together will benefit you more… since men trust more in their eyes than their ears,' (*viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit…quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt*, 6.5). Even a more advanced student cannot yet dispense entirely with the need for external experience, including the external experience of friendship. And the practitioner of friendship at a distance, the letter-writer, requires an addressee. Or does he? Maybe this requirement is purely, or merely, a formal one. Another look at Long's insightful formulation of the *Moral Epistles'* overall function suggests an intriguing alternative. As Long (2009) 36 writes, Seneca's letters set out and describe the fluctuating contours of 'the gap between what *we* are and what *we* would like to be (emphasis mine).'

---

[25] I have adopted Graver and Long's translation (2015) 42 of *amicis illi opus est* here.

In our active reading the letters build verbal enclosures that can both shelter us (and their author) and also promote our (and his) liberation. They are 'open fortresses,' in Rimell's words ((2015) 127), for us as well as for Seneca. While each of us must spring or grope our way out on our own, the letters offer crucial assistance by pointing out pitfalls, dispensing advice, and encouraging us to develop our capacity for self-reflection. Not coincidentally, this list equally well characterizes the assistance rendered to a friend by a friend, whether through conversation in person or by written communication. The letters end up performing the same office or service or gift (*munus*) that is performed by a living friend. This realization invites the question of whether an individual letter, like *Letter* 35, or the correspondence as a whole could be just as much as the 'friend' of Seneca, and the beneficiary of his love, as Lucilius, real or imagined, is. Maybe a sufficiently advanced *proficiens* could address anyone, or no one? Formally, this could be problematic. After all, the epistolary form entails a second-person addressee. But just as the letter collection in a sense comprises the authorial self, via a creative act of integration (Graver (2014) 291), so too, the letters create Lucilius, in his textual form. I have argued that *finge* and *finges* at the ending of *Letter* 31 set up Seneca's use of that verb in *Letter* 35. If we look at the beginning of *Letter* 31, we may see Seneca playfully co-identifying his correspondent with the text: 'I recognize my Lucilius' (*Agnosco Lucilium meum, Ep.* 31.1). But the idea that the *Letters* are an all-sufficing enclosure, in which author and addressee and anticipated reader, beloved friends all, are all *merely* letters (whether *epistulae* or *litterae)*, reducible to 'textual structures' (Iser's term quoted in Edmunds (2001) 157), is too arid a formulation for the therapeutic nature of Seneca's project.

I agree with Wildberger (2014) 442, as I noted near the outset of this paper, that in the *Letters,* Seneca 'takes care to stress emphatically that he is *not* at all an Epicurean in his ethics of social relations.' The Stoics believed that nature has made humans sociable; Seneca's explanation of the wise man's participation in friendship rests explicitly on this point (9.17), and he returns to it in *Letter* 48, writing, 'if you would live for yourself, you must live for another' (*alteri vivas oportet, si vis tibi vivere*, *Ep*. 48.2). When Seneca urges his addressee to 'keep on, so you may learn how to love' in *Letter* 35, he has in mind a practice that is not confined to the page. There are good indications that he also does not have in mind a love that is concerned with himself and Lucilius

alone. A number of letters before *Letter* 35 have already indicated other friends. *Letter* 11 begins 'Your promising friend spoke with me' (*Locutus est mecum amicus tuus bonae indolis*, 11.1) and *Letter* 25 starts out 'As for what applies to our two friends' (*Quod ad duos amicos nostros pertinent*, 25.1). Moreover, just as the sentence '*Adsero te mihi, meum opus es*,' midway through *Letter* 34 is linked to the sentence '*Adfer itaque te mihi, ingens munus*' in *Letter* 35 (as I discussed above), there is a similar linkage between the opening sentence of *Letter* 35 and *Letter* 36. *Letter* 35 began thus: 'When I vigorously demand that you study, I am doing my own business' (*Cum te tam valde rogo ut studeas, meum negotium ago*). *Letter* 36 begins more simply, 'Encourage your friend' (*Amicum tuum hortare*). An associative principle is at work, akin to a runner passing the baton in a relay race. Seneca has encouraged Lucilius, and now he encourages Lucilius to encourage a third friend. But the key connection between *Letters* 35 and 36 is the repeated occurrence of *negotium*, highlighted by its apparent opposite but actual synonym, *otium*:

> *Amicum tuum hortare ut istos magno animo contemnat qui illum obiurgant quod umbram et otium petierit, quod dignitatem suam destituerit et, cum plus consequi posset, praetulerit quietem omnibus; quam utiliter suum negotium gesserit cotidie illis ostentet.*
>
> Encourage your friend that he courageously scorn those who blame him because he seeks out shade and leisure, because he has abandoned his prestigious career and, when he could have achieved more, he has preferred quiet repose to all else. Let him show them daily how usefully he conducts his own business.

Again, as in the previous letter, Seneca uses *negotium* playfully, to refer to the activity of self-improvement via philosophy. And here, *negotium* is business that has required a withdrawal into apparent leisure (*otium*) for its dedicated pursuit. A final faux-Epicurean flourish is supplied by *utiliter*. As long as the *Epistulae Morales* continue simultaneously to teach philosophy as they also enact and represent its practice (or 'teach teaching by example' in Schafer's phrase (2011) 33), all three processes compassed by *negotium* referred to here and in *Letter* 35 will continue to be requisite and equally important: internal action (within oneself), dialogic action (exchange with one other), and also the extension of the dialogic exchange to include another – and then another and another. And all three processes conduct not only 'business,' but friendship.

It remains startling, nonetheless, to think that all three processes could be achieved within the mind of a single wise person, 'cultivating at home' (*domi colitur*). But this is the perfected process that Seneca anticipates at the center of *Letter* 35: 'you are mortal, I am old, but the vigor of your youth flows in to replenish my loss of vigor because there is no longer any boundary between us.' The making-communal of the younger partner's energy here is not theft or a kind of psychic vampirism, as it might appear, because this kind of being a friend depends only on the willing (*voluntas*) of the lover.[26] Because only the lover need act, and can act effectively by merely willing, the activity of possessing a friend and participating fully in friendship can happen while the friend remains physically separate from the one who loves him. This one, author and lover and friend, who wills another into friendship, in doing so simultaneously incorporates this friend as an integral part of himself. 'We' become 'one.' This lover would then naturally become a self-lover, and yet his self-loving would not be self-interested, at least not in the ordinary sense, because it is a purely intellectual act, taking place entirely within the mind.

Conclusion

Having made our way through the whole letter, we are now better positioned to understand how Seneca can write, in the first section of *Letter* 35, 'For now you love me, but you are not a friend' (*Nunc enim amas me, amicus non es*). Lucilius could write the same thing fairly to Seneca. Neither partner is yet so advanced as Hecato claimed to be, when he said 'You ask what I have accomplished? I have begun to be a friend to myself' *('Quaeris' inquit 'quid profecerim? amicus esse mihi coepi' Ep.* 6.7). But we can now observe that the *completion* of this self-befriending is what Seneca anticipates in the middle section of *Letter* 35, and the *process* of self-befriending is the business he urges on Lucilius at its opening. Virtually the same process could probably be traced in adjacent letters, and we might attempt it with the collection as a whole, if we were capable of the immense 'structuring activity' that such a vast quantity of close reading would entail. *Letter* 35 provides an instance of the process that is particularly susceptible to analysis because of its brevity, complemented by the density of its im-

[26] Compare the singular importance of 'the willing' to be good that Seneca underscores in *Ep*. 34.3-4, as Marchetti (2021) 286 remarks.

agery. Just as in *Odes* 1.9 Horace's speaker recalls past pleasure into being in the present, transforming cold, immobile old age into mobile, ardent youth via the solvent of stored-up memory – so, too, Seneca demonstrates how the intellectual activity of reading calls into being not only a reader, but a friend. *Writing* the letter is an act of integrating disparate elements that constitutes not only the authorial self, but the author as himself a friend. At the same time, writing the letter creates his friend the addressee within the writer's mind as a mental (and therefore truly real) image. As Graver (2014) 291 has concluded, 'the productive intellect that is responsible for a person's literary achievements is in the end not distinct from the *animus* as productive of everything he or she does.' *Reading* the letter, too, is a self-constitutive act and a loving act of friendship. As Shafer puts it, reading Seneca as Seneca shows and tells us to, 'makes the reader *work* ((2011) 36 emphasis added).'Actively reading *Letter* 35, or any or all of *Moral Epistles*, we take possession of them, to use a legal phrase, and in doing so, we cultivate ourselves, to use an agricultural term. Reading in this way is both teaching by example, and learning. And it is learning how to love another and also oneself.

Amanda Wilcox
Williams College
awilcox@williams.edu

References:

Allegri, G. "*Diversus, dissimilis:* a proposito di *amor* e *amicitia* nella lettera 35 di Seneca." *Paideia* 68 (2013): 437-451.

Altman, J. *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form.* Columbus, 1982.

Armisen-Marchetti, M. Sapientiae Facies: *Étude sur les images de Sénèque*. Paris, 1989.

Armisen-Marchetti, M. "Seneca's images and metaphors." In Bartsch/Schiesaro 2015: 150-160.

Bartsch, S. "Senecan Metaphor and Stoic Self-Instruction." In Bartsch/Wray 2009: 188-217.

Bartsch, S./Wray, D. (eds.) *Seneca and the Self.* Cambridge/New York, 2009.

Bartsch, S./Schiesaro, A. (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca.* New York, 2015.

Bellincioni, M. *Studi Senecani e altri scritti.* Brescia, 1986.

Berno, F.R. "Nurses Prayers, Philosophical *otium*, and Fat Pigs: Seneca *Ep.* 60 versus Horace *Ep.* 1.4." In Stöckinger/Winter/Zanker 2017: 53-71.

Berthet, J-F. "Sénèque lecteur d'Horace d'après les 'Lettres à Lucilius." *Latomus* 38 (1979): 940-954.

Brunt, P.A. *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays.* Oxford, 1988.

Cancik, H. *Untersuchungen zu Senecas Epistulae Morales.* Hildesheim, 1967.

Clark, J./Motto, A.L. "The Art of Paradox in Seneca's *Epistle* 60." *Maia* 42 (1990): 47-50.

Ceccarelli, P./Doering, L./Fögen, T./Gildenhard, I. (eds.) *Letters and Communities: Studies in the socio-political dimensions of ancient epistolography*. Oxford, 2018.

Destrée, P./Trivigno, F.V. (eds.) *Laughter, Humor, and Comedy in Ancient Philosophy*. New York/Oxford, 2019.

Dressler, A. "'You Must Change Your Life': Theory and Practice, Metaphor and Exemplum, in Seneca's Prose." *Helios* 39 (2013): 145-192.

Edmunds, L. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry.* Baltimore/London. 2001.

Edwards, C. "Absent presence in Seneca's Epistles: philosophy and friendship." In Bartsch/Schiesaro 2015: 41-53.

Edwards, C. "Saturnalian Exchanges: Seneca, Horace, and Satiric Advice." In Stöckinger, Winter/Zanker 2017: 73-89.

Edwards, C. "Conversing with the Absent, Corresponding with the Dead: Friendship and the Philosophical Community in Seneca's Letters." In Ceccarelli/Doering/Fögen/Gildenhard 2018: 325-351.

Evenepoel, W. "The Stoic Seneca on *virtus, gaudium* and *voluptas*." *AC* 83 (2014): 45-78.

Garbarino, G./Lana, I. *Incontri con Seneca.* Turin. 2001.

Garani, M. "Seneca on Pythagoras' *Mirabilia Aquarum* (*NQ* 3.20–1, 25–6; Ovid *Met*. 15.270–336) 1." In Garani/Michalopoulos/Papaioannou 2020: 198-224.

Garani, M./Michalopoulos, A.N./Papaioannou, S. *Intertextuality in Seneca's Philosophical Writings.* New York, 2020.

Gazzarri, T. *The Stylus and the Scalpel – Theory and Practice of Metaphors in Seneca's Prose.* Berlin/Boston. 2020.

Graver, M. *Stoicism and Emotion.* Chicago/London, 2007.

Graver, M.R. "Honeybee Reading and Self-Scripting: *Epistulae Morales* 84." In Wildberger/Colish 2014: 269-293.

Graver, M. "The Emotional Intelligence of Epicureans." In Williams/Volk 2016: 192-210.

Graver, M. "The Mouse, the Moneybox and the Six-Footed Scurrying Solecism." In Destrée/Trivigno 2019: 245-262.

Graver, M./Long, A.A. *Seneca. Letters on Ethics: To Lucilius*. Chicago, 2015.

Griffin, M. *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics*. Oxford/New York, 1976.

Hachmann, E. *Die Führung des Lesers in Senecas* Epistulae morales. Münster, 1995.

Harrison, S.J. (ed.) *Texts, Ideas, and the Classics: Scholarship, Theory, and Classical Literature.* Oxford, 2001.

Henderson, J. *Morals and Villas in Seneca's* Letters. Cambridge/New York, 2004.

Inwood, B./Gerson, L.P. *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*. Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1988[2].

Ker, J. "Seneca and Augustan Culture." In Bartsch/Schiesaro 2015: 109-121.

Lana, I. "L'amicizia secondo Seneca." In Garbarino/Lana 2001: 19-27.

Marchetti, S.C. "Seneca, gli amici, l'amicizia." *Maia* 73 (2021): 285-317.

Maurach, G. *Der Bau von Senecas* Epistulae Morales. Heidelberg, 1970.

Michalopoulos, A. "Seneca Quoting Ovid in the *Epistulae Morales*." In Garani/Michalopoulos/Papaioannou 2020:130-141.

Mollea, S. "*Naturales Quaestiones* 4A *Praef*. 20 and *Ep*. 34.2: Approaching the Chronology and Non-fictional Nature of Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*." *CQ* 69 (2019): 319-34.

Motto, A.L. *Further Essays on Seneca.* Frankfurt-am-Main, 2001.

Motto, A.L. "Seneca on Love." *CFC* 50 (2007): 79-86.

Müller, G.M./Fosca, M.-Z. (eds.) *Philosophie in Rom – Römische Philosophie?: Kultur-, Literatur- Und Philosophiegeschichtliche Perspektiven.* Berlin/Boston, 2018.

Papaioannou, S. "Reading Seneca reading Vergil." In Garani/Michalopoulos/Papaioannou 2020: 107-129.

Peachin, M. (ed.) *Aspects of Friendship in the Graeco-Roman World.* Portsmouth, RI, 2001.

Reydam-Schils, G. *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection.* Chicago, 2005.

Richardson-Hay, C. "Dinner at Seneca's Table: The Philosophy of Food." *G&R* 56 (2009): 71-96.

Rimell, V. *The Closure of Space in Roman Poetics: Empire's Inward Turn.* Cambridge/New York, 2015.

Schafer, J. "Seneca's *Epistulae Morales as Dramatized Education*." *CPh* 106 (2011): 32-52.

Schofield, M. *The Stoic Idea of the City.* Cambridge/New York, 1991.

Stöckinger, M./Winter, K./Zanker, A.T. (eds.) *Horace and Seneca: Interactions, Intertexts, Interpretations*. Berlin/Boston, 2017.

Tutrone, F. "Seneca on the Mother Cow." In Garani/Michalopoulos/Papaioannou 2020: 179-97.

Wilcox, A. *The Gift of Correspondence in Classical Rome: Friendship in Cicero's* Ad Familiares *and Seneca's* Moral Epistles. Madison/London, 2012.

Wildberger, J./Colish, M. (eds.) *Seneca Philosophus.* Berlin/Boston, 2014.

Wildberger, J. "The Epicurus Trope and the Construction of a 'Letter Writer' in Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*." In Wildberger/Colish 2014: 431-465.

Wildberger, J. "*Amicitia* and *Eros*: Seneca's Adaptation of a Stoic Concept of Friendship for Roman Men in Progress." In Müller/Fosca 2018: 387-426.

Williams, C.A. *Reading Roman Friendship.* Cambridge/New York, 2012.

Williams, G./Volk, K. (eds.) *Roman Reflections: Studies in Latin Philosophy.* Oxford/New York, 2016.

Williams, G. "Minding the Gap: Seneca, the Self, and the Sublime." In Williams/Volk 2016: 172-191.

Wilson, M. "Seneca's Letters to Lucilius: A Revaluation." *Ramus* 16 (1987): 102-121.

Wilson, M. "Seneca's *Epistles* Reclassified." In Harrison 2001: 164-187.

Zainaldin, J. "*Epistula* 86 Once Again: Agriculture and Philosophy in Seneca's *Moral Letters*." *CPh* 114 (2019): 218-237.