ARISTOTLE

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* takes seriously the techniques of persuasion, which in the ancient world were those of public speaking. The person employing rhetoric is aiming to persuade the audience, rather than to get them to believe what is true. Nonetheless, Aristotle claims that this endeavor is worthy of philosophical attention. It is not random, but organized in a way that repays study, and it is related to the philosopher's search for truth, since, he claims, humans tend overall to find truth more persuasive than error. (If we could be so easily manipulated as to find error as persuasive as truth, we would be grievously ill adapted to the world.)

Aristotle's discussion of the emotions has been particularly admired for its acute observation. The orator is concerned not with truth but with what works to persuade people. But to do this he must be right about their emotions and what the emotions involve; to rouse them rather than annoy them or to make them feel fear rather than indifference, he has to be right about what anger and fear are and what produces, sustains and diminishes them.

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is a collection of his lectures on ethics, put together by an editor some time after his death. For some reason now lost, it was named after Aristotle's son Nicomachus. Although it is often regarded as Aristotle's definitive work on ethics, it is not a modern book, written to an overall plan; there are different treatments of the same topic in different parts, and we have no reason to think that the order of the parts is Aristotle's. Some of the parts are particularly brilliant and memorable treatments of happiness and virtue.

For more on Aristotle, see p. 12.

Rhetoric II, PART OF 1, 2, 5, 8

ARISTOTLE

The emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgements, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure. Such are anger, pity, fear and the like, with their opposites. We must arrange what we have to say about each of them under three heads. Take, for instance, the emotion of anger: here we must discover what the state of mind of angry people is, who the people are 25
with whom they usually get angry, and on what grounds they get angry with

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them. It is not enough to know one or even two of these points; unless we know all three, we shall be unable to arouse anger in anyone. The same is true of the other emotions. So just as earlier in this work we drew up a list of propositions, let us now proceed in the same way to analyse the subject before us.

2. Anger may be defined as a desire accompanied by pain, for a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight at the hands of men who have no call to slight oneself or one's friends. If this is a proper definition of anger, it must always be felt towards some particular individual, e.g. Cleon, and not man in general. It must be felt because the other has done or intended to do something to him or one of his friends. It must always be attended by a certain pleasure—that which arises from the expectation of revenge. For it is pleasant to think that you will attain what you aim at, and nobody aims at what he thinks he cannot attain. Hence it has been well said about wrath,

> Sweeter it is by far than the honeycomb dripping with sweetness,
> And spreads through the hearts of men.

It is also attended by a certain pleasure because the thoughts dwell upon the act of vengeance, and the images then called up cause pleasure, like the images called up in dreams.

Now slighting is the actively entertained opinion of something as obviously of no importance. We think bad things, as well as good ones, have serious importance; and we think the same of anything that tends to produce such things, while those which have little or no such tendency we consider unimportant. There are three kinds of slighting—contempt, spite, and insolence. Contempt is one kind of slighting: you feel contempt for what you consider unimportant, and it is just such things that you slight. Spite is another kind; it is a thwarting another man's wishes, not to get something yourself but to prevent his getting it. The slight arises just from the fact that you do not aim at something for yourself: clearly you do not think that he can do you harm, for then you would be afraid of him instead of slighting him, nor yet that he can do you any good worth mentioning, for then you would be anxious to make friends with him. Insolence is also a form of slighting, since it consists in doing and saying things that cause shame to the victim, not in order that anything may happen to yourself, or because anything has happened to yourself, but simply for the pleasure involved. (Retaliation is not insolence, but vengeance.) The cause of the pleasure thus enjoyed by the insolent man is that he thinks himself greatly superior to others when ill-treating them. That is why youths and rich men are insolent; they think themselves superior when they show insolence. One sort of insolence is to rob people of the honour due to them; you certainly slight them thus; for it is the unimportant, for good or evil, that has no honour paid to it. So Achilles says in anger:

> He hath taken my prize for himself and hath done me dishonour,

and

> Like an alien honoured by none,

meaning that this is why he is angry. A man expects to be specially respected by his inferiors in birth, in capacity, in goodness, and generally in anything in which he is much their superior: as where money is concerned a wealthy man looks for respect from a poor man; where speaking is concerned, the man with a turn for oratory looks for respect from one who cannot speak; the ruler demands the respect of the ruled, and the man who thinks he ought to be a ruler demands the respect of the man whom he thinks he ought to be ruling. Hence it has been said

> Great is the wrath of kings, whose father is Zeus almighty,

and

> Yea, but his rancour abideth long afterward also,

their great resentment being due to their great superiority. Then again a man looks for respect from those who he thinks owe him good treatment, and these are the people whom he has treated or is treating well, or means or has meant to treat well, either himself, or through his friends, or through others at his request.

It will be plain by now, from what has been said, in what frame of mind, with what persons, and on what grounds people grow angry. The frame of mind is that in which any pain is being felt. In that condition, a man is always aiming at something. Whether, then, another man opposes him either directly in any way, as by preventing him from drinking when he is thirsty, or indirectly; whether someone works against him, or fails to work with him, or otherwise vexes him while he is in this mood, he is equally angry in all these cases. [Hence people who are afflicted by sickness or poverty or love or thirst or any other unsatisfied desires are prone to anger and easily roused: especially against those who slight their present distress.] Thus a sick man is angered by disregard of his illness, a poor man by disregard of his poverty, a man waging war by disregard of the war he is waging, a lover by disregard of his love, and so in other cases too. Each man is predisposed, by the emotion now controlling him, to his own particular anger. Further, we are angered if we happen to be expecting a contrary result; for a quite unexpected evil is specially painful, just as the quite unexpected fulfilment of our wishes is specially pleasant. Hence it is plain what seasons, times, conditions, and periods of life tend to stir men easily to anger, and where and when this will happen; and it is plain that the more we are under these conditions the more easily we are stirred.

These, then, are the frames of mind in which men are easily stirred to anger. The persons with whom we get angry are those who laugh, mock, or jeer at us, for such conduct is insolent. Also those who inflict injuries upon us that are marks of insolence. These injuries must be such as are neither retaliatory nor

profitable to the doers; for then they will be felt to be due to insolence. Also those who speak ill of us, and show contempt for us, in connexion with the things we ourselves most care about: thus those who are eager to win fame as philosophers get angry with those who show contempt for their philosophy; those who pride themselves upon their appearance get angry with those who show contempt for their appearance; and so on in other cases. We feel particularly angry on this account if we suspect that we are in fact, or that people think we are, lacking completely or to any effective extent in the qualities in question. For when we are convinced that we excel in the qualities for which we are jeered at, we can ignore the jeering. Again, we are angrier with our friends than with other people, since we feel that our friends ought to treat us well and not badly. We are angry with those who have usually treated us with honour or regard, if a change comes and they behave to us otherwise; for we think that they feel contempt for us, or they would still be behaving as they did before. And with those who do not return our kindnesses or fail to return them adequately, and with those who oppose us though they are our inferiors; for all such persons seem to feel contempt for us—those who oppose us seem to think us inferior to themselves, and those who do not return our kindnesses seem to think that those kindnesses were conferred by inferiors. And we feel particularly angry with men of no account at all, if they slight us. For we have supposed that anger caused by the slight is felt towards people who are not justified in slighting us, and our inferiors are not thus justified. Again, we feel angry with friends if they do not speak well of us or treat us well; and still more, if they do the contrary; or if they do not perceive our needs, which is why Plexippus is angry with Meleager in Antiphon's play; for this want of perception shows that they are slighting us—we do not fail to perceive the needs of those for whom we care. Again, we are angry with those who rejoice at our misfortunes or simply keep cheerful in the midst of our misfortunes, since this shows that they either hate us or are slighting us. Also with those who are indifferent to the pain they give us: this is why we get angry with bringers of bad news. And with those who listen to stories about us or keep on looking at our weaknesses; this seems like either slighting us or hating us; for those who love us share in all our distresses and it must distress anyone to keep on looking at his own weaknesses. Further, with those who slight us before five classes of people: namely, our rivals, those whom we admire, those whom we wish to admire us, those for whom we feel reverence, those who feel reverence for us: if anyone slights us before such persons, we feel particularly angry. Again, we feel angry with those who slight us in connexion with what we are as honourable men bound to champion—our parents, children, wives, or subjects. And with those who do not return a favour, since such a slight is unjustifiable. Also with those who reply with humorous levity when we are speaking seriously, for such behaviour indicates contempt. And with those who treat us less well than they treat everybody else; it is another mark of contempt that they should think we do not deserve what everyone else deserves. Forgetfulness, too, causes anger, as when our own names are forgotten, trifling as this may be; since forgetfulness is felt to be another sign that we are being slighted; it is due to negligence, and to neglect us is to slight us.

The persons with whom we feel anger, the frame of mind in which we feel it, and the reasons why we feel it, have now all been set forth. Clearly the orator will have to speak so as to bring his hearers into a frame of mind that will dispose them to anger, and to represent his adversaries as open to such charges and possessed of such qualities as do make people angry.

5. Next, we show the things and persons of which, and the states of mind in which, we feel afraid. Fear may be defined as a pain or disturbance due to imagining some destructive or painful evil in the future. For there are some evils, e.g. wickedness or stupidity, the prospect of which does not frighten us: only such as amount to great pains or losses do. And even these only if they appear not remote but so near as to be imminent: we do not fear things that are a very long way off; for instance, we all know we shall die, but we are not troubled thereby, because death is not close at hand. From this definition it will follow that fear is caused by whatever we feel has great power of destroying us, or of harming us in ways that tend to cause us great pain. Hence the very indications of such things are terrible, making us feel that the terrible thing itself is close at hand; and this—the approach of what is terrible—is danger. Such indications are the enmity and anger of people who have power to do something to us; for it is plain that they have the will to do it, and so they are on the point of doing it. Also injustice in possession of power; for it is the unjust man's choice that makes him unjust. Also outraged excellence in possession of power; for it is plain that, when outraged, it always chooses to retaliate, and now it has the power to do so. Also fear felt by those who have the power to do something to us, since such persons are sure to be ready to do it. And since most men tend to be bad—slaves to greed, and cowards in danger—it is, as a rule, a terrible thing to be at another man's mercy; and therefore, if we have done anything horrible, those in the secret terrify us with the thought that they may betray or desert us. And those who can do us wrong are terrible to us when we are liable to be wronged; for as a rule men do wrong to others whenever they have the power to do it. And those who have been wronged, or believe themselves to be wronged, are terrible; for they are always looking out for their opportunity. Also those who have done people wrong, if they possess power, since they stand in fear of retaliation: we have already said that wickedness possessing power is terrible. Again, our rivals for a thing cause us fear when we cannot both have it at once; for we are always at war with such men. We also fear those who are to be feared by stronger people than ourselves: if they can hurt those stronger people, still more can they hurt us; and, for the same reason, we fear those whom those stronger people are actually afraid of. Also those who have destroyed people stronger than we are. Also those who are attacking people weaker than we are: either they are already formidable, or they will be so when they have thus grown stronger. Of those we have wronged, and of our enemies or rivals, it is not the passionate and outspoken whom we have to fear, but the quiet, dissembling, unscrupulous; since we never know when they are upon us, we can never be sure they are at a safe distance. All terrible things are more terrible if they give us no chance of retrieving a blunder—either no chance at all, or only one that depends on our enemies and not ourselves. Those things are also worse which

we cannot, or cannot easily, help. Speaking generally, anything causes us to feel fear that when it happens to, or threatens, others causes us to feel pity.

The above are, roughly, the chief things that are terrible and are feared. Let us now describe the conditions under which we ourselves feel fear. If fear is associated with the expectation that something destructive will happen to us, plainly nobody will be afraid who believes nothing can happen to him; we shall not fear things that we believe cannot happen to us, nor people who we believe cannot inflict them upon us; nor shall we be afraid at times when we think ourselves safe from them. It follows therefore that fear is felt by those who believe something to be likely to happen to them, at the hands of particular persons, in a particular form, and at a particular time. People do not believe this when they are, or think they are, in the midst of great prosperity, and are in consequence insolent, contemptuous, and reckless—the kind of character produced by wealth, physical strength, abundance of friends, power; nor yet when they feel they have experienced every kind of horror already and have grown callous about the future, like men who are being flogged to death—if they are to feel the anguish of uncertainty, there must be some faint expectation of escape. This appears from the fact that fear sets us thinking what can be done, which of course nobody does when things are hopeless. Consequently, when it is advisable that the audience should be frightened, the orator must make them feel that they really are in danger of something, pointing out that it has happened to others who were stronger than they are, and is happening, or has happened, to people like themselves, at the hands of unexpected people, in an unexpected form, and at an unexpected time.

Having now seen the nature of fear, and of the things that cause it, and the various states of mind in which it is felt, we can also see what confidence is, about what things we feel it, and under what conditions. It is the opposite of fear, and what causes it is the opposite of what causes fear; it is, therefore, the imaginative expectation of the nearness of what keeps us safe and the absence or remoteness of what is terrible: it may be due either to the near presence of what inspires confidence or to the absence of what causes alarm. We feel it if we can take steps—many, or important, or both—to cure or prevent trouble; if we have neither wronged others nor been wronged by them; if we have either no rivals at all or no strong ones; if our rivals who are strong are our friends or have treated us well or been treated well by us; or if those whose interest is the same as ours are the more numerous party, or the stronger, or both.

As for our own state of mind, we feel confidence if we believe we have often succeeded and never suffered reverses, or have often met danger and escaped it safely. For there are two reasons why human beings face danger calmly: they may have no experience of it, or they may have means to deal with it: thus when in danger at sea people may feel confident about what will happen either because they have no experience of bad weather, or because their experience gives them the means of dealing with it. We also feel confident whenever there is nothing to terrify other people like ourselves, or people weaker than ourselves, or people than whom we believe ourselves to be stronger—and we believe this if we have conquered them, or conquered others who are as strong as they are, or stronger. Also if we believe ourselves superior to our rivals in the number and importance of the advantages that make men formidable—plenty of money, men, friends, land, military equipment (of all, or the most important, kinds). Also if we have wronged no one, or not many, or not those of whom we are afraid. And when we are being wronged; [[and generally, if our relations with the gods are satisfactory, as will be shown especially by signs and oracles]] for anger makes us confident and, anger is excited by our knowledge that we are not the wrongers but the wronged, and that the divine power is always supposed to be on the side of the wronged. Also when, at the outset of an enterprise, we believe that we cannot fail, or that we shall succeed. So much for the causes of fear and confidence.

8. So much for kindness and unkindness. Let us now consider pity, asking ourselves what things excite pity, and for what persons, and in what states of our mind pity is felt. Pity may be defined as a feeling of pain at an apparent evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon. For if we are to feel pity we must obviously be capable of supposing that some evil may happen to us or some friend of ours, and moreover some such evil as is stated in our definition or is more or less of that kind. It is therefore not felt by those completely ruined, who suppose that no further evil can befall them, since the worst has befallen them already; nor by those who imagine themselves immensely fortunate—their feeling is rather insolence, for when they think they possess all the good things of life, it is clear that the impossibility of evil befalling them will be included, this being one of the good things in question. Those who think evil *may* befall them are such as have already had it befall them and have safely escaped from it; elderly men, owing to their good sense and their experience; weak men, especially men inclined to cowardice; and also educated people, since these can take long views. Also those who have parents living, or children, or wives; for these are our own, and the evils mentioned above may easily befall them. And those who are neither moved by any courageous emotion such as anger or confidence (these emotions take no account of the future), nor by a disposition to insolence (insolent men, too, take no account of the possibility that something evil will happen to them), nor yet by great fear (panic-stricken people do not feel pity, because they are taken up with what is happening to themselves); only those feel pity who are between these two extremes. In order to feel pity we must also believe in the goodness of at least some people; if you think nobody good, you will believe that everybody deserves evil fortune. And, generally, we feel pity whenever we are in the condition of remembering that similar misfortunes have happened to us or ours, or expecting them to happen in future.

So much for the mental conditions under which we feel pity. What we pity is stated clearly in the definition. All unpleasant and painful things excite pity, and all destructive things; and all such evils as are due to chance, if they are serious. The painful and destructive evils are: death in its various forms, bodily injuries and afflictions, old age, diseases, lack of food. The evils due to chance are: friendlessness, scarcity of friends (it is a pitiful thing to be torn away from friends and companions), deformity, weakness, mutilation; evil coming from a source from which good ought to have come; and the frequent repetition of such

misfortunes. Also the coming of good when the worst has happened: e.g. the arrival of the Great King's gifts for Diopeithes after his death. Also that either no good should have befallen a man at all, or that he should not be able to enjoy it when it has.

The grounds, then, on which we feel pity are these or like these. The people we pity are: those whom we know, if only they are not very closely related to us—in that case we feel about them as if we were in danger ourselves. For this reason Amasis did not weep, they say, at the sight of his son being led to death, but did weep when he saw his friend begging: the latter sight was pitiful, the former terrible, and the terrible is different from the pitiful; it tends to cast out pity, and often helps to produce the opposite of pity. For we no longer feel pity when the danger is near ourselves. Also we pity those who are like us in age, character, disposition, social standing, or birth; for in all these cases it appears more likely that the same misfortune may befall us also. Here too we have to remember the general principle that what we fear for ourselves excites our pity when it happens to others. Further, since it is when the sufferings of others are close to us that they excite our pity (we cannot remember what disasters happened a hundred centuries ago, nor look forward to what will happen a hundred centuries hereafter, and therefore feel little pity, if any, for such things): it follows that those who heighten the effect of their words with suitable gestures, tones, appearance, and dramatic action generally, are especially successful in exciting pity: they thus put the disasters before our eyes, and make them seem close to us, just coming or just past. Anything that has just happened, or is going to happen soon, is particularly piteous: so too therefore are the signs of suffering—the garments and the like of those who have already suffered; the words and the like of those actually suffering—of those, for instance, who are on the point of death. For all this, because it seems close, tends to produce pity. Most piteous of all is it when, in such times of trial, the victims are persons of noble character, for their suffering is undeserved and it is set before our eyes.

Nicomachean Ethics II, 1, PARTS OF 2 AND 3; IV, 5

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Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word habit. From this it is also plain that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. For instance the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated

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to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.

Again, of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity (this is plain in the case of the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

This is confirmed by what happens in states; for legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them, and this is the wish of every legislator, and those who do not effect it miss their mark, and it is in this that a good constitution differs from a bad one.

Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and by being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, in one word, states of character arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states of character correspond to the differences between these. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference.

First, then, let us consider this, that it is the nature of such things to be destroyed by defect and excess, as we see in the case of strength and of health (for to gain light on things imperceptible we must use the evidence of sensible things); exercise either excessive or defective destroys the strength, and similarly drink or food which is above or below a certain amount destroys the health, while that which is proportionate both produces and increases and preserves it. So too is it, then, in the case of temperance and courage and the other virtues. For the man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash; and similarly the man who

indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the man who shuns every pleasure, as boors do, becomes in a way insensible; temperance and courage, then, are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean.

But not only are the sources and causes of their origination and growth the same as those of their destruction, but also the sphere of their actualization will be the same; for this is also true of the things which are more evident to sense, e.g. of strength; it is produced by taking much food and undergoing much exertion, and it is the strong man that will be most able to do these things. So too is it with the virtues; by abstaining from pleasures we become temperate, and it is when we have become so that we are most able to abstain from them; and similarly too in the case of courage; for by being habituated to despise things that are fearful and to stand our ground against them we become brave, and it is when we have become so that we shall be most able to stand our ground against them.

We must take as a sign of states of character the pleasure or pain that supervenes upon acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent, and he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave, while the man who is pained is a coward. For moral excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of the pleasure that we do bad things, and on account of the pain that we abstain from noble ones. Hence we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; this is the right education.

Again, if the virtues are concerned with actions and passions, and every passion and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, for this reason also virtue will be concerned with pleasures and pains. This is indicated also by the fact that punishment is inflicted by these means; for it is a kind of cure, and it is the nature of cures to be effected by contraries.

Good temper is a mean with respect to anger; the middle state being unnamed, and the extremes almost without a name as well, we place good temper in the middle position, though it inclines towards the deficiency, which is without a name. The excess might be called a sort of "irascibility." For the passion is anger, while its causes are many and diverse.

The man who is angry at the right things and with the right people, and, further, as he ought, when he ought, and as long as he ought, is praised. This will be the good-tempered man, then, since good temper is praised. For the good-tempered man tends to be unperturbed and not to be led by passion, but to be angry in the manner, at the things, and for the length of time, that the rule dictates; but he is thought to err rather in the direction of deficiency; for the good-tempered man is not revengeful, but rather tends to make allowances.

The deficiency, whether it is a sort of "unirascibility" or whatever it is, is blamed. For those who are not angry at the things they should be angry at are thought to be fools, and so are those who are not angry in the right way, at the right time, or with the right persons; for such a man is thought not to feel things nor to be pained by them, and, since he does not get angry, he is thought unlikely to defend himself; and to endure being insulted and put up with insult to one's friends is slavish.

The excess can be manifested in all the points that have been named (for one can be angry with the wrong persons, at the wrong things, more than is right, too quickly, or too long); yet *all* are not found in the same person. Indeed they could not; for evil destroys even itself, and if it is complete becomes unbearable. Now *hot-tempered* people get angry quickly and with the wrong persons and at the wrong things and more than is right, but their anger ceases quickly—which is the best point about them. This happens to them because they do not restrain their anger but retaliate openly owing to their quickness of temper, and then their anger ceases. By reason of excess *choleric* people are quick-tempered and ready to be angry with everything and on every occasion; whence their name. *Sulky* people are hard to appease, and retain their anger long; for they repress their passion. But it ceases when they retaliate; for revenge relieves them of their anger, producing in them pleasure instead of pain. If this does not happen they retain their burden; for owing to its not being obvious no one even reasons with them, and to digest one's anger in oneself takes time. Such people are most troublesome to themselves and to their dearest friends. We call *bad-tempered* those who are angry at the wrong things, more than is right, and longer, and cannot be appeased until they inflict vengeance or punishment.

To good temper we oppose the excess rather than the defect; for not only is it commoner (since revenge is the more human), but bad-tempered people are worse to live with.

What we have said in our earlier treatment of the subject is plain also from what we are now saying; viz. that it is not easy to define how, with whom, at what, and how long one should be angry, and at what point right action ceases and wrong begins. For the man who strays a little from the path, either towards the more or towards the less, is not blamed; since sometimes we praise those who exhibit the deficiency, and call them good-tempered, and sometimes we call angry people manly, as being capable of ruling. How far, therefore, and how a man must stray before he becomes blameworthy, it is not easy to state in words; for the decision depends on the particular facts and on perception. But so much at least is plain, that the middle state is praiseworthy—that in virtue of which we are angry with the right people, at the right things, in the right way, and so on, while the excesses and defects are blameworthy—slightly so if they are present in a low degree, more if in a higher degree, and very much if in a high degree. Evidently, then, we must cling to the middle state.—Enough of the states relative to anger.

COMMENTS

In the *Rhetoric,* Aristotle brings out the role of belief in emotion. Having certain beliefs is essential to having particular emotions; you can't, for example, feel anger

at a person if you do not think that he has slighted you in some way. This belief is not just a cause or necessary condition of the emotion; it is part of what the emotion is, and so a correct specification of the beliefs is essential to a correct account of the emotion. Emotions can stand in the way of rational reflection, but for Aristotle this does not mean that they belong to a part of the soul that is subrational. Emotions involve their own beliefs and sometimes quite complex reasonings. These beliefs are, however, based on an immediate and hence partial view of the situation (for example, pity is defined as a feeling of pain at an *apparent* evil), and more rational reflection may modify the beliefs and so dispel or calm down the emotion.

Aristotle begins with anger, prominent in all ancient accounts of emotion; he associates it with feeling slighted and with contexts of competition and awareness of status and entitlements. Are these contexts central to anger? Are there cases of anger that we would have trouble fitting into Aristotle's analysis? This question raises the issue that different cultures understand and express emotions differently. Some aspects of anger are "socially constructed"; they depend on beliefs that are important in one culture, but may be unimportant in others. Where this is the case, the emotion in question will be expressed in different ways and may play a different role. An analysis like Aristotle's, which lays weight on the role of beliefs in emotions, is particularly useful for pointing up such differences.

Fear and pity are central to Aristotle's analysis of the effect of tragic drama in the *Poetics,* his work on poetry and drama. These emotions are relevant to tragedy because in these plays the events—murder, incest, defeat in war—are the kinds of things we fear happening to us, and because we feel that the people suffering these events in the play are like us, we pity them. Aristotle thinks that tragic drama achieves in some way a catharsis of these emotions, but unfortunately it is not clear what this is, other than some kind of clarification or purifying.

In the *Ethics,* Aristotle's account of the development of virtue gives an important role to the emotions. You develop a virtue, such as courage, rather as you learn a skill. You begin by copying what experts do and eventually master what has to be done, becoming an expert yourself. With skills, however, all that matters is being able to produce the expert result; with virtue, you need not only to do the right action, but to do it in the right way—roughly, for the right reason and without having to battle contrary motivation. For Aristotle, a virtue is a settled state of character not only to act rightly but to have the right motivation. Doing the right thing, but having to overcome desires not to do it, shows that you are merely "self-controlled"; the virtuous person does the right thing gladly, with pleasure. What this shows is that becoming virtuous requires a training of the emotions as well as of the intelligence. If the emotions were thought of as subrational forces, this process could merely be one of repression, but since Aristotle thinks that emotions involve beliefs as part of what they are, we can see that he thinks of them as educable and trainable.

Aristotle holds that virtue "lies in a mean" and aims at a mean between two extremes. That is, virtue is always getting things right (in action and in the way you feel) where you could go wrong either through doing and feeling too much, or through doing and feeling too little. Regarding anger, Aristotle analyzes the virtue of "good temper" as aiming at the mean intermediate between the bad extremes of

being too prone to anger and being not prone enough to anger. The virtuous person will get angry "at the right things and with the right people, and, further, as he ought, when he ought, and as long as he ought." Is this a good analysis of anger? Aristotle includes different ways of being too prone to anger or too slow to be angry. Do they all fit the model of excess, deficiency, and the mean between them?

The Early Stoics on Emotions

1. They say that what moves an impulse is nothing but an impulsory appearance of what is then and there appropriate, and that impulse is in general a movement of the soul toward something. The species of impulse, they say, is observed to be that which comes about in the rational animals and that in the nonrational ones; but these have no [distinct] names; for desire is not rational impulse, but a species of rational impulse. As for rational impulse, it would properly be defined by saying that it is a movement of the mind toward something involved in acting; and to this is opposed counterimpulse, a kind of movement [of the mind away from something in acting]. (Arius Didymus in Stobaeus, *Eclogae* II, 86–87)

2. They say that all the impulses are assents, but that the practical ones contain the motive element. Actually, assents are to one thing, and impulses toward another; assents are to statements of a kind, and impulses are toward predicates, those that are somehow contained in the statements to which they assent. . . .

An emotion (*pathos*), they say, is an impulse that is excessive and disobedient to reason, which is dictating: or an [irrational] movement in the soul contrary to nature (all emotions belong in the soul's ruling part); so that every upset is an emotion, and again every emotion is an upset. Emotion being of such a kind, we must suppose that some are primary and lead the way, while others have their reference to these. Primary in the genus are these four: desire, fear, pain, and pleasure. Desire and fear take the lead, desire being directed toward apparent good and fear directed toward apparent evil. Pleasure and pain supervene on these, pleasure when we get what we were desiring or escape what we were fearing, and pain when we fail to get what we were desiring or happen on what we were fearing. With all the soul's emotions, since they call them beliefs, the belief is understood as a weak supposition. (Arius, 88–89)

3. First, one must keep in mind that the rational animal is by nature such as to follow reason and to act with reason as his guide. But often he moves in another way toward some things and away from some things in disobedience to reason when he is pushed too much. Both definitions refer to this movement: The unnatural motion arises irrationally in this way and also the excess in the impulses. For this irrationality must be understood as disobedient to reason and rejecting it, and with reference to this motion, we say in ordinary usage that some persons are pushed and moved irrationally without reason and judgment.

For when we use these expressions, it is not as if a person is carried away by error. . . .

When a man walks in accordance with an impulse, the motion of his legs is not excessive but is in some way commensurate with the impulse, so that he may stop when he wishes or change his pace. But when persons run in accordance with an impulse, this sort of thing no longer happens. The movement of the legs exceeds the impulse, so that they are carried away and do not obediently change their pace [as they did before] the moment they set out to do so. I think that something similar to these [movements of the legs] happens also in impulses because of an excess beyond the rational measure, so that when a man exercises the impulse he is not obedient to reason, and whereas the excess in running is termed contrary to the impulse, the excess in impulse is termed contrary to reason. (Galen, *The Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* IV, 2, 10–12, 15–17)

4. They say that the emotion is not distinct from reason and that there is no dispute or civil war between two things, but a turning of one and the same reason to both sides, which we do not notice because of its suddenness and speed; for we do not grasp that it is the nature of the same aspect of the soul to feel desire and to change one's mind, to feel anger and feel fear, to be carried toward what is shameful by pleasure and to be carried back again and get a hold of itself. (Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 446 ff)

COMMENTS

For the Stoics, any action, in humans or in animals, is brought about by an impulse (*horme*), which is a response to something in the environment that strikes the agent as requiring a response (technically, this is an "impulsory appearance"). Humans are distinguished from animals, however, in their possession of reason, and this informs everything they do. Reason is the "craftsman of impulse," so in a human, every impulse, that is, every response to our environment, is rational in the sense of involving reason in some way, although, of course, not every impulse is rational in the sense of involving *good* reasoning.

All our impulses can be represented as articulated in language (for the Stoics, the ability to communicate in language is the most important characteristic of reason). Hence, in the second passage, we find an articulation of the logical form of the beliefs, which, for the Stoics, are implied in every human impulse. (The details of this point are controversial and disputed by scholars.) This does not, of course, imply that every time we act on an impulse, we utter language or go through statements in our heads. In any case, when a human acts in accordance with an impulse, there is a belief that can, in principle, be represented in language and that has a particular logical form.

Emotions are a kind of impulse—that is, a kind of response we make to the world when it seems to us to require a reaction on our part. What distinguishes them is that an impulse is always an *excessive* impulse, one that, while rational in the sense in which all human impulses are rational, is also disobedient to reason in the sense of *good* reason.

In the ancient world this idea was frequently ridiculed and misunderstood. A sympathetic interpretation needs to bear two points in mind.

1. Emotions are often said to be beliefs or opinions. This is because for the Stoics, they are impulses, and any human impulse involves a belief that can, in principle, be articulated in language. They are not just like the belief that it is raining because they are also irrational—that is, motivations that run contrary to what the person judges to be good reasoning and hence are experienced as upsetting or blocking factors in the person. Although the Stoics stress the intellectual side of emotions more, their analysis on this point is not different from Aristotle's.

2. For the Stoics, all of a human soul is rational; we have no motivations that lack belief and reason altogether. Their model of human action is different from Plato's and Aristotle's. For the Stoics, the person always acts as a whole; different motivations are not to be thought of as coming from different parts of the soul. When a person feels conflicted between two courses of action, she does not have two different things inside her that are battling for control; rather, the person as whole is oscillating between two different evaluations of the situation. Chrysippus describes the person overcome by emotion not as someone who is internally conflicted, but as someone who as a whole is out of control, just like a walker who starts running and then finds it hard to stop and to control what she is doing.

The Stoics, with their model of a unitary soul, stress that we are just as responsible for what we do when in the grip of anger as we are for what we do in a calm and considered way. We cannot say that we were "overwhelmed" by emotion or think of reason as our real self that was overcome by some other force. In the Stoics' view, the whole self is integrated in its reactions, and we express and identify ourselves and our commitments in the entirety of our affective responses, not just in good reasoning.

But why are all emotions bad? A later Stoic, Seneca, gives us more illumination.

SENECA

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 1 B.C.–A.D. 65), Stoic philosopher, was born in Cordoba, Spain, but studied in Rome and made headway as a writer and orator. In 41 he was banished by the emperor Claudius for adultery with Julia Livilla, Claudius' niece. Political motives now unclear to us may have been behind the charge. In 49 Seneca was recalled by Agrippina, another of Claudius' nieces and now his wife, and was made tutor to her twelve-year-old son, the future emperor Nero. Seneca tutored Nero in rhetoric and became an adviser to and restraining influence on Nero in the early years of his reign. As Nero came increasingly under the influence of people who flattered his sense of self-

importance, Seneca's influence weakened, and in 62 he withdrew from public life. In 65 Nero suspected Seneca of being implicated in a conspiracy against him that included the poet Lucan, Seneca's nephew; Seneca duly committed suicide.

Seneca wrote prose treatises on philosophical subjects and a large number of literary letters, as well as tragic dramas in verse. His style is highly rhetorical, always pointed, and forceful, forcing the reader to think about the issues. Seneca is less good at sustaining a continuous argument, and his philosophical works are often untidy in overall structure, although particular pieces of argument are brilliantly clear. He is always conscious of writing for an educated general audience, not an audience of professional philosophers, and thus his writing can lack rigor and clarity; but it gives a vivid sense of Stoicism as a set of beliefs to be lived by and the demands that this makes. From antiquity on, there has been a debate as to whether Seneca's own life, that of a very rich man deeply involved in politics, compromises his stance as a Stoic philosopher. Certainly, Seneca never claims to be a model of Stoic virtue himself, but he does give us a feeling of what it is like to try to live up to a rigorous and demanding theory.

On Anger I, 7–9, 12–14, 17–18; II, 1–4, 6–10, 28

SENECA

Book 1

1. Can it really be that anger, although it is not natural, should be adopted because it has often proved useful? "It rouses and spurs on the mind. Without it, courage can achieve nothing magnificent in war—without the flame of anger beneath, to goad men on to meet danger with boldness." Some, accordingly, think it best to moderate anger, not to remove it. They would confine it to a wholesome limit by drawing off any excess, while retaining what is essential for unenfeebled action, for unsapped force and vigour of spirit. <Well>, in the first place, it is easier to exclude the forces of ruin than to govern them, to deny them admission than to moderate them afterwards. For once they have established possession, they prove to be more powerful than their governor, refusing to be cut back or reduced. Moreover, reason itself, entrusted with the reins, is only powerful so long as it remains isolated from the affections. Mixed and contaminated with them, it cannot contain what it could previously have dislodged. Once the intellect has been stirred up and shaken out, it becomes the servant of

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the force which impels it. Some things at the start are in our power; thereafter they sweep us on with a force of their own and allow no turning back. Bodies in free fall have no control over themselves. They cannot delay or resist the downward course. Any deliberation and second thoughts are cut short by the peremptory force of gravity. They cannot help completing a trajectory which they need not have begun. In the same way, the mind, if it throws itself into anger, love and other affections, is not allowed to restrain the impulse. It is bound to be swept along and driven to the bottom by its own weight and by the natural downward tendency of any failing.

It is best to beat back at once the first irritations, to resist the very germs of anger and take care not to succumb. Once it has begun to carry us off course, the return to safety is difficult. Reason amounts to nothing, once the affection has been installed and we have voluntarily given it some legal standing. From then on, it will do what it wants, not what you allow it. The enemy, I say, must be stopped at the very frontier; when he has invaded and rushed on the city gates, there is no "limit" which his captives can make him accept. It is not the case that the mind stands apart, spying out its affections from without, to prevent their going too far—the mind itself turns into affection. It cannot, accordingly, reinstate that useful and wholesome force which it has betrayed and weakened. As I said, it is not the case that they dwell apart, in isolation from one another. Reason and affection are the mind's transformations for better or for worse. How then can reason, under the oppressive domination of its failings, rise again, if it has already given way to anger? How can it free itself from the chaos, if the admixture of baser ingredients has prevailed? "But some people," it may be said, "control their anger." So as to do nothing that anger dictates—or some of it? If nothing, there is clearly no need, when it comes to doing things, of the anger which you recommend as somehow more forceful than reason. Now my next question: is anger stronger than reason—or weaker? If stronger, how can reason put a limit on it? It is only the feebler, normally, who submit. If anger is weaker, reason can do without it. It is sufficient by itself for getting things done and has no need for a weaker ally. "But some people stay true to themselves and control themselves in their anger." When? As their anger evaporates and departs of its own accord, not at its boiling-point—it is too strong then. "Well, is it not sometimes true that, even in anger, people release the objects of their hatred unharmed and untouched? Do they not refrain from harming them?" They do. But when? When affection has driven back affection, when fear or lust has obtained its demand. Quiet has ensued, thanks not to reason, but to an evil, untrustworthy armistice between the affections.

Again, there is nothing useful in anger. It does not whet the mind for deeds of war. Virtue needs no vice to assist it; it suffices for itself. Whenever impetus is necessary, it does not break out in anger; it rises to action aroused and relaxed to the extent that it thinks necessary, in just the same way that the range of a missile shot from a catapult is under the control of the operator. "Anger," says Aristotle, "is needful; no fight can be won without it, without its filling the mind and kindling enthusiasm there; it must be treated, however, not as a commander but as one of the rank and file." That is false. If it listens to reason and follows where

led, it is no longer anger, the hallmark of which is wilful disobedience. But if it rebels against orders to stay still and follows its own ferocious fancy, it is as useless a subordinate in the soul as a soldier who ignores the signal for retreat. So if it accepts a limit, it needs some other name, having ceased to be anger, which I understand to be something unbridled and ungoverned. If it does not, it is ruinous and not to be counted as an assistant. Either it is not anger at all, or it is useless. Anyone who exacts punishment not through greed for the punishment itself, but because he should, does not count as angry. A good soldier is one who knows how to obey orders and carry out decisions. The affections are no less evil as subordinates than they are as commanders.

2. "Tell me then, is the good man not angry if he sees his father slain and his mother ravished?" No, he will not be angry. He will punish and protect. Why should not filial devotion, even without anger, be enough of a stimulus? You could argue in the same way: "Tell me then, if he sees his father or son undergoing surgery, will the good man not weep or faint?" We see this happening to women whenever they are struck by the slightest suggestion of danger. The good man will do his duty, undismayed and undaunted; and he will do what is worthy of a good man without doing anything unworthy of a *man*. "My father is about to be killed—I will defend him; he has been killed—I will avenge him; not because I am pained, but because I should." "Good men are angry at wrongs done to their friends." When you say this, Theophrastus, you cast odium on braver teachings. You turn from the judge to the gallery. Since everyone is angry when something like that happens to his friends, you think that men will judge what they do to be what ought to be done. Nearly everyone holds emotions to be justified which he acknowledges in himself. But they behave in the same way if the hot drinks are not served properly, if a piece of glassware is broken, if a shoe has mud on it. The motive for such anger is not devotion, but weakness, just as it is with children who bewail the loss of their parents—exactly as they bewail the loss of their toys. Anger for one's friends is the mark of a weak mind, not a devoted one. What is fine and honourable is to go forth in defence of parents, children, friends and fellow-citizens, under the guidance of duty itself, in the exercise of will, judgment and foresight—and not through some raving impulse. No affection is keener to punish than anger is. For that very reason, it is ill fitted for punishing. Headlong and mindless like almost every burning desire, it gets in the way of what it rushes to do. So neither in peace nor in war has it ever been any good. In fact it makes peace resemble war. Under arms, it forgets that "Mars is impartial" and falls into the power of others, having no power over itself.

Again, failings should not be pressed into service on the grounds that they sometimes achieve something. Fevers, too, alleviate some kinds of ill health. But that does not mean that it would not be better to be without them altogether—it is a hateful sort of remedy that leaves one owing one's health to disease. In the same way, anger may sometimes have proved unexpectedly beneficial—like poison, a fall, or a shipwreck. But that does not make it wholesome. Lives, after all, have often been saved by deadly objects.

Again, things worth having are the better and more desirable the more of them there is. If justice is a good thing, no one will say that it is better with a bit taken off. If courage is a good, no one will want it partly diminished. Therefore, in the case of anger too, the more, the better. Who would refuse an addition of anything that is good? But the augmentation of anger is not of positive use. Nor, therefore, is its existence. There is no good that becomes bad by increment.

"Anger is of use," it may be said, "because it makes men keener to fight." On that principle, drunkenness too would be useful—it makes men reckless and bold; many have proved better at arms when worse for drink. On the same principle, you could say that lunacy and madness are necessary for strength—frenzy often makes men stronger. Tell me, have there not been times when fear has, paradoxically, made for boldness and dread of death has aroused even the most indolent to battle? But anger, drunkenness, fear and other such conditions are vile, unsteady incitements. What they provide is not the equipment for courage—virtue has no need for vices—but merely a slight uplift for souls otherwise slothful or cowardly. No one is braver for being angry, save he who would not have been brave without anger. It comes not as an aid to courage, but as a replacement for it.

And what about this? If anger were a good, it would go with the highest degree of moral perfection. But those most prone to anger are children, the old and the sick. Anything weak is naturally inclined to complain.

"A good man," says Theophrastus, "cannot help being angry at bad people." On that principle, the better a man is, the more prone he will be to anger. Are you sure that he will not, on the contrary, be the calmer and free from affections, someone who hates no one? What has he, in truth, to hate about wrongdoers? Error is what has driven them to their sort of misdeeds. But there is no reason for a man of understanding to hate those who have gone astray. If there were, he would hate himself. He should consider how often he himself has not behaved well, how often his own actions have required forgiveness—his anger will extend to himself. No fair judge will reach a different verdict on his own case than on another's. No one, I say, will be found who can acquit himself; anyone who declares himself innocent has his eyes on the witness-box, not on his own conscience. How much humaner it is to show a mild, paternal spirit, not harrying those who do wrong, but calling them back! Those who stray in the fields, through ignorance of the way, are better brought back to the right path than chased out altogether.

3. Aristotle says that some emotions, if well used, serve as arms. That would be true if, like weapons of war, they could be picked up and put down at will. But these arms which Aristotle would give to virtue go to war by themselves, without awaiting the hand of the warrior. They possess us; they are not our possessions. We have no need for other weapons; it is enough that nature has equipped us with reason. What she has given us is firm, enduring, accommodating, with no double edge to be turned on its owner. Reason by itself is enough not merely for foresight but for action. Indeed, what could be stupider than for reason to seek protection in bad temper, for something that is stable,

trustworthy and sound to seek protection in something unsteady, untrustworthy and sick? And what of the fact that for action too, the one area with some apparent need for the services of bad temper, reason by itself is far stronger? Having judged that something should be done, it sticks to its judgment. It will find nothing better than itself into which it might change. So it stands by its decisions once they are made. Anger is often driven back by pity. For it has no solid strength. An empty swelling with a violent onset, like winds which rise from the earth and, begotten in river and marsh, are strong without staying-power, it begins with a mighty impulse, and then fails exhausted before its time. Having pondered nothing save cruelty and new kinds of punishment, it shows itself, when the time has come to punish, broken and weak. Affections collapse quickly; reason remains constant. Moreover, even where anger has persisted, we sometimes find that, if there are several who deserve to die, it stops the killing after the first two or three. Its first blows are the fierce ones. In the same way, it is when the serpent first crawls out of its den that its venom is harmful; drained by repeated use, its fangs are innocuous. Hence equal crimes receive unequal punishment, and one who has committed less often receives more, being exposed to fresher wrath. Anger is altogether inconsistent. Sometimes it goes further than it should, sometimes it stops short. It indulges itself, judges capriciously, refuses to listen, leaves no room for defence, clings to what it has seized and will not have its judgment, even a wrong judgment, taken from it.

Reason gives time to either side, and then demands a further adjournment to give itself room to tease out the truth: anger is in a hurry. Reason wishes to pass a fair judgment: anger wishes the judgment which it has already passed to seem fair. Reason considers nothing save the matter at issue; anger is roused by irrelevant trifles. An overconfident look, a voice too loud, speech too bold, a manner too refined, a rather too ostentatious show of support, popularity with the public—all serve to exasperate it. For hatred of the lawyer it often damns the accused. Even if the truth is put before its eyes, it fondly defends its error. Refusing to be proved wrong, it sees obstinacy, even in what is ill begun, as more honourable than a change of mind.

Book II

4. Our question is whether anger starts with a decision or with an impulse, that is, whether it is set in motion of its own accord—or in the same way as most inner events which occur with our full knowledge. Our discussion must plunge into these topics so that it can rise again to loftier ones. In the organization of our bodies too, the bones, muscles and joints, which underpin the whole and give it vitality, though not at all attractive, come first. They are followed by the components on which beauty in appearance and looks depends. After all this, comes what most seizes the eye; when the body is at last complete, the complexion is finally applied.

Anger is undoubtedly set in motion by an impression received of a wrong. But does it follow immediately on the impression itself and break out without any involvement of the mind? Or is some assent by the mind required for it to be set in motion? Our view is that it undertakes nothing on its own, but only with the mind's approval. To receive an impression of wrong done to one, to lust for retribution, to put together the two propositions that the damage ought not to have been done and that punishment ought to be inflicted, is not the work of a mere involuntary impulse. That would be a simple process. What we have here is a complex with several constituents—realization, indignation, condemnation, retribution. These cannot occur without assent by the mind to whatever has struck it.

"What is the point," you ask, "of this question?" That we may know what anger is, since it will never, if it comes to birth against our will, yield to reason. Involuntary movements can be neither overcome nor avoided. Take the way that we shiver when cold water is sprinkled on us, or recoil at the touch of some things. Take the way that bad news makes our hair stand on end and indecent language brings on a blush. Take the vertigo that follows the sight of a precipice. None of these is in our power; no amount of reasoning can induce them not to happen. But anger *is* put to flight by precept. For it is a voluntary fault of the mind, and not one of those which occur through some quirk of the human condition and can therefore happen to the very wisest of men, even though they include that first mental jolt which affects us when we think ourselves wronged. This steals upon us even while we are watching a performance on stage or reading of things that happened long ago. We are sometimes incited by singing, by a quickened tempo, by the martial sound of trumpets. Our minds are moved by a gruesome painting, by the grim sight of the justest punishment. That is why we join in laughing with those who laugh, why a crowd of mourners depresses us, why we boil over at conflicts which have nothing to do with us. But these are not cases of anger, any more than it is grief which makes us frown at the sight of a shipwreck on stage or fear that runs through the reader's mind as Hannibal blockades the walls after the battle of Cannae. No, all these are motions of minds with no positive wish to be in motion. They are not affections, but the preliminaries, the prelude to affections. So it is that in time of peace a military man in civilian clothes pricks up his ears at the sound of a trumpet, that camp horses rear at the clattering of arms.

None of these fortuitous mental impulses deserves to be called an "emotion." They are something suffered, so to speak, not something done by the mind. Emotion is not a matter of being moved by impressions received, but of surrendering oneself to them and following up the chance movement. If anyone thinks that pallor, falling tears, sexual excitement or deep sighing, a sudden glint in the eyes or something similar are an indication of emotion or evidence for a mental state, he is wrong; he fails to see that these are just bodily agitations. Thus it is that even the bravest man often turns pale as he puts on his armour, that the knees of even the fiercest soldier tremble a little as the signal is given for battle, that a great general's heart is in his mouth before the lines have charged against one another, that the most eloquent orator goes numb at the fingers as he prepares to speak. Anger, however, must not only be set in motion: it has to break out, since it is an impulse. But impulse never occurs without the mind's

assent, nor is it possible to act for retribution and punishment unbeknown to the mind. Suppose that someone thinks himself harmed and wishes to exact retribution, that something dissuades him and he promptly calms down—this I do not call "anger," since it is a motion of the mind obedient to reason. Anger is a motion which outleaps reason and drags it along. So the first mental agitation induced by the impression of wrong done is no more anger than is the impression itself. The impulse that follows, which not only registers but confirms the impression, is what counts as anger, the agitation of a mind proceeding by its own deliberate decision to exact retribution. Nor can there be any doubt that, as fear implies flight, anger implies attack. Do you really think, then, that anything can be sought or shunned without the mind's assent?

If you want to know how the emotions begin, grow or get carried away, the first movement is involuntary, a preparation, as it were, for emotion, a kind of threat. The next is voluntary but not insistent—I may, for example, think it right for me to wreak vengeance because I have been harmed or for him to be punished because he has committed a crime. The third really is out of control; wanting retribution not just "if it is right" but at all costs, it has completely overcome the reason. The first is a mental jolt which we cannot escape through reason, just as we cannot escape those physical reactions which I mentioned—the urge to yawn when some one else yawns, or blinking when fingers are flicked at the eye. These cannot be overcome by reason, though habituation and constant attention may perhaps lessen them. The other sort of movement, generated by decision, can be eliminated by decision.

5. "Virtue that looks with favour upon things that are honourable ought likewise to look with anger upon things shameful." Do you mean to say that virtue should be both base and great? But that is what is being said by one who would have it exalted and abased, in as much as joy at right action is glorious and splendid, while anger at another's transgression is sordid and narrow-minded. Nor will virtue ever allow itself to imitate vice in the act of suppressing it. Anger itself it holds to deserve chastisement, being not one bit better, and often still worse, than the misdeeds which arouse it. Rejoicing and joy are the natural property of virtue; to be angry accords no more with the dignity of virtue than does grief. Sorrow is the companion of irascibility; all anger reverts to it, either remorseful or rebuffed. Again, if the wise man's nature is to be angry at transgressions, he will be angrier the greater they are, and he will be angry often. It follows that the wise man will not only lose his temper on occasion; he will be habitually bad-tempered. But if we believe that there is no room in his mind for great or frequent anger, why should we not make him free of this affection altogether? For there can be no limit to his anger, if it is to tally with each man's action. Either he will be unfair, if he is equally angry at unequal misdeeds, or he will be very irascible indeed, if he flares up as often as crimes are committed that merit his anger.

It would be scandalous—could anything be more so?—for the wise man's state of mind to depend on the wickedness of others. Is Socrates to lose his power to come home with the same expression on his face as when he left it? Yet,

if the wise man has a duty to be angry at shameful deeds, to be provoked and depressed by crime, nothing will be more troubled than the wise man. His entire life will be spent in bad temper and grief. At every moment he will see something to disapprove of. Every time that he leaves his house, he will have to step through criminals, grasping, spendthrift, shameless—and prospering as a result. Everywhere that his eyes turn they will find some ground for indignation. His powers will fail him if he forces himself to anger as often as anger is due. All those thousands rushing to the forum at day-break—how vile their law-suits are, how much viler their advocates! One brings an action against the verdicts of his father—he would have done better not to deserve them. Another proceeds against his mother. A third arrives to denounce a crime of which he is the more obvious culprit. A judge is selected to condemn what he himself has committed; and the gallery, corrupted by good pleading, sides with the bad.

Why go into details? When you see the forum crammed, the enclosures thronged with an entire population, when you see the Circus with the mass of the people on show, you can be sure of this, that there are as many vices here as men. You will see people here out of military dress but still at war with each other. One man is brought for a paltry gain to ruin someone else; no one makes a profit except by wronging another; they hate the prosperous, they despise the unfortunate; they feel oppressed by their betters, and are themselves oppressive to their inferiors. Goaded by diverse appetites, they would sacrifice everything for some trivial pleasure or plunder. Life is the same here as in a school of gladiators—living together means fighting together. A gathering of wild animals is what you have here, were it not that animals are calm among themselves and refrain from biting their own kind, while these people glut themselves with tearing one another apart. Nor is this their only difference from dumb beasts. Animals grow tame to those who nurture them; human frenzy feeds on those who feed it.

The wise man will never cease to be angry, if once he starts.

You will do better to hold, instead, that no one should be angry at error. Surely no one would be angry with people who stumble in the dark or whose deafness stops them from hearing an order. Or with children who fail to see what they should be doing and turn their attention to games and the silly jokes of those their own age. Or with the sick, the old, the weary. This too is one of the misfortunes of our mortal condition: darkness of mind, the inevitability of error—and, still more, the love of error. To avoid anger with individuals, you must forgive the whole group, you must pardon the human race. If you are angry with young and old for their wrongdoing, be angry with infants, too: they are going to do wrong. No one is angry with children who are too young to know the difference between things. But being human is more of an excuse, and a juster excuse, than being a child. For this was what we were born to be—animals prone to ailments of the mind no less than of the body, not exactly stupid or slow, but given to misusing our shrewdness, each an example of vice to the other. Anyone who has followed his predecessors down the wrong path has surely the excuse of having gone astray on a public highway. A general applies

severity to individuals: when the whole army has deserted, he can only show clemency. What rids the wise man of anger? The sheer multitude of wrongdoers. He knows that it is unfair and unsafe to be angry at failings shared by all.

6. If we wish our judgment to be fair in all things, we must start from the conviction that no one of us is faultless. For here is where indignation most arises—"I haven't done anything wrong!," "I haven't done a thing!" On the contrary, you won't *admit* anything! We grow indignant at any rebuke or punishment, while at that very moment doing the wrong of adding insolence and obstinacy to our misdeeds. Who can claim himself innocent in the eyes of every law? Suppose he can—to be good in the sense of being law-abiding is a very narrow form of innocence. So much wider are the principles of moral duty than those of law, so many the demands of piety, humanity, justice and good faith, none of them things in the statute-book. But even under that very restricted definition we cannot establish our innocence. We have done some things; others we have planned, or wanted or felt inclined to do. In some cases, our innocence has simply been through lack of success.

This thought should make us more reasonable towards wrongdoers, ready to accept reproach, free of anger, at any rate, towards good men—who would not arouse our anger, if even good people can?—and above all towards the gods. It is not by any fault of theirs, but through the law of our mortal condition, that anything untoward happens to us. "But disease and pain intrude upon us!" Some things just have to be endured if your lot is live in a crumbling house. Suppose, then, that someone speaks ill of you—think whether you did not do so to him, think of how many people *you* speak ill of. We should think, I maintain, of some not as doing us wrong but as paying us back, of others as acting on our behalf, or as acting under compulsion, or in ignorance; we should think that even those who wrong us knowingly and deliberately are not out for the wrong itself when they wrong us. A person may have slipped into it through delight in his own wit; or he may have done something, not to disoblige us, but because he could not get what he wanted without first having rebuffed us. Besides, flattery is often offensive in its fawning. Anyone who calls to mind how often he himself has come under false suspicion, how many services on his part have chanced to look like injustice, how many people he has hated and then begun to love, can avoid immediate anger, especially if he says quietly to himself at every vexation "I too have done this myself."

But where can you find such a reasonable judge? The very same man who fancies everyone's wife, and finds justification enough for an affair in the mere fact that she belongs to another, will not have his own wife looked at; the keenest to insist on trust will be given to breaking it; the persecutor of lies is himself a perjuror; the vexatious litigant cannot bear to have a case brought against himself; and the chastity of servants is guarded from temptation by a master with no regard for his own. Other people's faults are before our eyes, our own lie over our shoulders. That is why the ungodly hour of a son's dinner-party is berated by a father who is worse than the son, why no allowance is made for other people's self-indulgence by a man with no restraint on his own, why a murderer meets with wrath from a tyrant and theft with punishment from a temple-robber. Many of mankind, indeed, are angry not with the sin, but the sinner. A look at ourselves will make us more forbearing, if we start to consider: "Surely we too have done something like this? Surely we have made this sort of mistake. Is it in our interest to damn it?"

COMMENTS

For the Stoics, all emotions are faulty, and we should get rid of them. For the Stoics, only virtue is good, while other things have a different kind of value, and hence all emotions are faulty because they involve a misguided belief that things other than virtue—honor, money, health, and so on—are good. The virtuous person, they think, will be without emotion—*apathes*. This does not mean that she will be affectless; it means that her motivation will not conflict with her considered views about value. (The Stoics have a different word—*eupatheiai* or "good feelings"—for the state of the virtuous person's feelings.) Properly understood, the Stoics think, emotions hinder virtue and the good life, and our usual fairly favorable view of them rests on serious misconceptions.

Even if you do not accept Stoic ethical theory, you can take the point that emotions tend to pull us away from our considered view of what is valuable. Seneca is writing for a general audience and aims to make the Stoic position as plausible as he can, since he is aware that the bare position, especially if stated in academic terms, appears counterintuitive and unattractive. (At times he appeals to his audience's beliefs even when a Stoic would ultimately reject them—for example, when he appeals to the idea that resisting emotion is manly and giving in to it is typically female.)

Contrary to Aristotle, Seneca claims, in the first and third extracts, that anger cannot be limited to a mean that avoids extremes. Once you give in to it, there is no safe way of controlling the way you act, since anger is essentially an unstable and untrustworthy motivation. Aristotle is thus wrong to think that the virtuous way of dealing with anger is to develop a right way of feeling it and a correct way of channeling it into action. Anger is not a part of you that reason can control; to let yourself become angry is to let your reason become corrupted into evaluating the situation wrongly. Hence anger should be eliminated, not controlled and trained. Seneca tries to show that this conclusion is actually truer than Aristotle's to what we really think about anger when we put our minds to the matter. Do you agree? This is an issue on which it is not as obvious as it first appears what we really think about anger and other emotions.

In the second extract, Seneca undercuts the opposition by showing how anger is not required as a motivation. We may think that we need anger to fuel a reaction to some dreadful action. But, says Seneca, our moral outrage is sufficient to get us to do what is needed. Moreover, if we are angry, we are liable to go beyond what is morally required, to overreact and go morally wrong ourselves.

In the first of the Book II extracts, Seneca gets us to rethink our deep-seated conviction that we cannot help getting angry. There *are* phenomena, he admits, that are

not under our control; we can't help the way we react to some happenings. But this is not really anger, which involves a commitment to an evaluation of what happened; it is in our power, if we think about it, to commit ourselves, or not, to it. Once we accept this point, then we can see that what we thought of as an emotional state forced on us by events is actually a product of the way we choose to think about and evaluate what is happening to us.

The two final extracts illustrate, in different ways, another aspect of the Stoic theory of the emotions, one shared by some other philosophers. People who think of themselves as being in the grip of emotions are misguided and, as such, should not be opposed and attacked, but helped. In much ancient philosophy, there is a *therapeutic* strand, which represents philosophy as a cure for problems of the soul in a way similar to that in which medicine cures the body. Seneca urges us not to feel anger at the one thing that might seem to warrant it—moral badness. If we allow ourselves to get worked up at crime and moral evil, he warns, our lives will be unlivable, since there is so much of it around. Rather than let ourselves be driven neurotic by trying to oppose moral evil, we should try to cure it if we can. Seneca thinks that we should not look away from the evil in the world, and we should react to it in as moral a way as we can. But anger is never an appropriate or helpful reaction to it. Furthermore, the final extract emphasizes the idea that the best thing we can do is to concentrate on ourselves and our own tendency to find fault. Only when we have thought honestly about our own shortcomings will we be in shape to judge those of others.

C. A Test Case

One of the most famous plays in the ancient world, Euripides' *Medea*, led to a dispute among philosophers as to how Medea's inner conflict should be understood.

EURIPIDES

Euripides of Athens (c. 485–406 B.C.) was the latest of the three writers of tragic drama to become canonical in the ancient world (the others being Aeschylus and Sophocles). Eighteen of his ninety plays survive. There are many passages in the plays in which characters argue points, often of contemporary intellectual concern. Some scholars have taken these passages to be expressions of intellectual attitudes, statements of or responses to philosophical arguments. However, Euripides does not use his plays to present a systematic set of his own ideas; rather, he uses intellectual ideas at different points to develop a

character or to create theatrical effects, and we do not know what his own ideas were.

The present passage from his play *Medea* became famous, as we shall see, among philosophers, who gave different philosophical explanations of it, but it would be wrong to think that Euripides himself is using a speech at a dramatic point of the play to offer the audience a philosophical idea of his own. Like some other passages in his plays, it stimulated philosophical discussion, but is not itself a piece of philosophy.

Medea 1021–1080

Euripides

(Medea speaking) Oh, children, children, you have a city and home, and, once you've left me in my misery, you will live here, forever motherless. But I shall go into exile in another land before having the pleasure of seeing you happy, before seeing your bridal baths and wives and laying out your marriage-beds and holding the wedding-torches.—Oh, my misery stems from my hard-heartedness!—It was for nothing, children, that I brought you up, for nothing that I suffered and was torn with agony, bearing the sharp pains of childbirth. Once, sadly for me, I had many hopes for you, that you would look after me in my old age and wrap me up carefully with your own hands after my death, something that human beings long for. But now that sweet hope has died. Without you I shall lead a life that is bitter and painful for me. You will no longer see your mother with your dear eyes, moving off to another form of life.

Ah, Ah! Why do you gaze at me with your eyes, children? Why do you smile your last smile? Oh, what shall I do? My courage has gone, women, now that I've seen the shining eyes of the children. I couldn't do it. Goodbye to my former plans! I'll take my children from this land. Why should I, in harming them to give their father pain, make myself suffer twice as much? I cannot. Goodbye plans!

But what is happening to me? Do I want to make myself ridiculous, letting my enemies go unpunished? I must go through with this. What a coward I am—even to admit soft words into my mind! Go into the house, children. If there is anyone who should not be present at my sacrifice, that will be up to them. I shall not weaken my hand.

Ah, Ah! Don't, my heart, don't you do this! Leave them alone, wretched heart, spare the children! Living there with me they will give you joy.

By the avenging furies down in Hades, I swear I'll never leave these children for my enemies to insult and torture! They must certainly die; and since they must, then I who gave birth to them shall kill them. In any case, the thing's done now and she will not escape: yes, the coronet is on her head and the royal bride is wearing the dress and dying, I'm sure of that.

But, now that I'm to go on the saddest of roads, and to send them on a sadder one still, I want to speak to the children. Give me, children, give me your right hand for your mother to hold. Oh hand and mouth that are dearest to me, and the fine body and face of children! Be happy, both of you—but there. Your life here has been taken away by your father. Oh, sweet embrace, oh soft skin and the sweetest breath of children! Go away, go away! I can no longer look at you but I am overcome by troubles.

I know that what I am about to do is bad, but anger is master of my plans, which is the source of the greatest troubles for humankind.

COMMENTS

Medea is a figure of Greek myth, with several clusters of stories round her. Euripides' play deals with Medea's relationship with Jason, who sailed in the ship *Argo* to Colchis in the far north to find the Golden Fleece. The king of Colchis, Aeetes, refused Jason's request for the Fleece, but his daughter Medea fell in love with Jason and helped him, by her magic skills, to perform the tasks the king set him. Returning to Greece with the Fleece and Medea, Jason was driven from his own kingdom after Medea used her magic to kill his uncle. In the play Jason, Medea, and their two sons have ended up in Corinth, living on the hospitality of King Creon. To mend his fortunes, Jason has left his family and intends to marry the king's daughter. Medea responds passionately to this betrayal. She kills the king and his daughter by poison, and to punish Jason, kills their sons. This act puts her beyond the bounds of the human; in the last scene she appears in the role of a divine being, carried off to safety in the chariot of her grandfather the Sun, leaving behind Jason condemned to a life in which he has lost everything.

Mythical stories could take various forms. Euripides' play, which made a strong impact, fixed Medea as the killer of her children (not true of all previous versions of the story). Euripides plays down Medea's character as a foreigner with magic skills and presents her story as that of a wronged woman, whom the Chorus of Greek women see as one of themselves. The horrific outcome develops from an ordinary situation, that of a husband seeking present advantage by abandoning a loyal wife who has made sacrifices for him.

This is the scene where Medea, who had resolved to kill her children, finds her intent weakening when she sees them. She goes through a series of fluctuations, which she sees as moving between reason and her pride and resentment at Jason's abandonment. She kills the children, much as it devastates her to do so, because nothing less than this will punish Jason for what he has done.

At the end of the speech Medea utters words that became famous and controversial. She knows how evil the action is that she has resolved to do, but she says that anger is master of her plans. What is meant by "master of" (*kreissōn*)? It could mean that Medea is aware of two conflicting forces within herself, passion and reasoned resolve, and finds that passion is the stronger force. Or it could mean that passion is

The story of Medea had a continuing fascination in the ancient world. This wall painting is from Pompeii, a Roman city destroyed by volcanic ash when the volcano Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79, but is probably a copy of an older original. It illustrates the scene in Euripides' play quite closely, though it is not a depiction of actors (in the ancient theater actors wore stylized costume and masks) but an interpretation of Medea's situation. (Wall painting from the House of the Dioscuri, Pompeii Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Alinari/Art Resource, New York.)

directing her resolves, that she has committed herself to her passionate anger and pride.

This ambiguity can't be reproduced in English, and translators (and actors) have to decide for themselves what reading to give it. As we shall see, two philosophically different interpretations of Medea's state develop these two ways of interpreting the line and of reading the entire speech.

Discourses I, 28, 1–9; II, 17, 17–25

Epictetus

1. What is the reason of our assenting to anything?—Its appearing to be so.—Therefore, assenting to what appears not to be so is impossible.—Why?—Because the nature of the mind is just this, to agree to things that are true, to be unsatisfied with things that are false, and to suspend judgment about things that are unclear. What is the proof of this?—Have the experience now, if you can, that it is night.—It's not possible.—Don't have the experience now that it is day.—It's not possible. Have the experience that the stars are even in number, or don't have it.—It's not possible.—So, whenever someone assents to something false, be assured that he did not want to assent to something false, for "every soul is unwilling to be deprived of the truth," as Plato says; the false thing appeared to him to be true.

Well, with actions what do we have corresponding to the true and the false there? Appropriate and inappropriate actions, advantage and disadvantage, what is proper for me and proper for you, and the like.—Can't someone, then, think that something is to his advantage, but not choose it?—No, he can't.

—But what about Medea, who says, "I know that what I am about to do is bad, but anger is master of my plans"?

—It's precisely this, gratifying her anger and being revenged on her husband, that she thinks more advantageous than saving her children.—Yes, but she's deceived.—Then show her clearly that she is deceived, and she won't do it. But as long as you don't show her, what else can she follow but what appears to her to be so? Nothing. Why then are you angry with her, because the poor woman has gone astray in what matters most and has become a viper instead of a human? If anything, why not rather pity her? Why do we not pity people who have become blinded and lamed in what matters most in the way we pity the blind and the lame?

2. Right now, do you not want what is possible, and possible for you in particular? What stands in your way, then? Why are you troubled? Right now, are you not trying to escape what is necessary? Why, then, do you fall into difficulties? Why are you unfortunate? Why is it that when you want something, it doesn't come about, but it does come about when you don't want it? This is the greatest proof of trouble and unhappiness: I want something, and it doesn't come about—and what is more wretched than I am? I don't want something, and it does come about—and what is more wretched than I am?

Medea, for example, could not endure this and so ended by killing her children. In this respect, at least, she acted from a great spirit—for she had the right impression of what it is not to get what one wants. "Well then," she says, "I shall be revenged on the man who wronged and insulted me. But what shall I gain from his being reduced to such a state? How can it come about? I will kill our children. Yet I shall be punishing myself, too. But what do I care?" This is the outburst of a soul of great force. For she did not know where the power lies to do what we want—that this is not to be got from outside ourselves or by changing and rearranging things. Stop wanting your husband, and nothing you want will fail to come about. Stop wanting him to live with you at any cost, stop wanting to stay in Corinth—in general, stop wanting anything but what god wants. Who will stop you, who will compel you? Nobody, any more than they could stop or compel Zeus.

When you have such a leader and want and desire along with him, why are you still afraid of failing? Commit your desire and aversion to riches and poverty—you will fail and will fall into what you want to avoid. Commit them to health—you will fall into misfortune, as you will if you commit them to political offices, honors, your native country, your friends, your children, and, in general, to anything not an object of moral choice. But commit them to Zeus and the other gods, hand them over to them, let them do the steering, let your desire and aversion be ranged on their side—and how can you be troubled any more?

COMMENTS

From the start, the Stoics discussed Euripides' Medea, as we can see from the work of later Stoics like Epictetus. Medea is oscillating between two resolves; first she decides one way and then the other, depending on how much weight she gives to her passionate resentment or her calmer judgment. (Look back at the Plutarch passage on p. 98.) Medea's lucidity about her position makes her a good example of the Stoic unitary model of the soul: People are responsible for what they do when led by emotion just as much as for what they do when led by calm and correct judgment. Medea does not think of herself as overwhelmed by a force that is not her real self; she identifies completely with the course she resolves on, painful though it is for her.

In the first passage, Epictetus stresses that we don't act in accordance with beliefs that we recognize to be false or perverse; hence Medea is not being swept away on a tide of passion against her view of what is good, but is acting for the best, although she is deeply misguided about what is best. We should sympathize with her, rather than feel angry; she acted in accordance with what she most valued (and this was hardly trivial). If you criticize Medea, then you are committed to showing her why she was wrong to do what she did. Until you do so, the appropriate attitude is that of sympathy for the misguided. (Compare the Seneca passage.)

Epictetus also emphasizes that it is always possible to change our view of our situation and so to act differently. Medea did not have to revenge herself on Jason; she could have decided to stop thinking that revenge was the most important thing. She

did not do so because she did not try hard enough to accept what had happened and to adjust to it. (This is what Epictetus means by accepting the will of Zeus.) Accepting what has happened produces a realistic view of the situation, which is blocked by emotion that traps Medea into a wrong view of what her options are.

GALEN

Galen (A.D. 129–c. 200) of Pergamum was a physician who rose from being physician to the school of gladiators at Pergamum to being personal physician to the emperor Marcus Aurelius. He wrote at enormous length on a vast range of medical and philosophical subjects; by historical accident he became the major medical authority in the Middle Ages and beyond in Western Europe. In medicine he defended the views of the much earlier "Hippocrates" (a collection of mostly fifth-century B.C. writings), including a theory of the four "humors." He defended the view in one of his writings that "the best doctor should be a philosopher" and brings theoretical and philosophical considerations into discussions of medical topics. The present passage is taken from a long work, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, in which medical theories are mixed up with a discussion of Platonic and Stoic views on the unity of the soul and the nature of emotion. Galen is an unattractive writer, pompous and self-important, who is constantly using philosophy to impress the reader, but whose philosophical grasp is often uncertain, and who has strong prejudices that get in the way of his understanding theories other than the one he favors.

On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato III, 3, 13–24

GALEN

Odysseus [in Homer] seeing the maidservants misbehaving was dragged forcibly toward punishing them by his anger, but was held back by reason, which explained that this would be untimely. . . .

Plato, I consider, recalls this passage of Homer most opportunely in the fourth book of the *Republic*. But it is most inopportune of Chrysippus to cite it, and even more so is his citation of the passage that Euripides has Medea speak when reason was warring with anger in her soul. She knew that she was performing an impious and terrible action in setting her hand to the murder of her children, and for this reason was hesitant, put it off, and did not do at once the

deed she had had the impulse to do. But then again anger, like a disobedient horse that has got the better of the charioteer, dragged her by force toward the children—and back again reason pulled her and led her away, and then again anger pulled against this, and then again reason.

So as she is repeatedly driven back and forth between the two of them, when she has conceded to anger, then at that point Euripides has her say, "I know that what I am about to do is bad, but anger is master of my plans." She understands, indeed, the magnitude of the evils that she intends to do because she is taught by reason, but she says that anger is stronger than it and that for this reason she is led forcibly by it toward the action. She is the opposite of Odysseus, who held back his anger by reason. Euripides has put forward his Medea as an example of barbarians and other uncivilized people, in whom anger is stronger than reason. With Greeks and civilized people, such as Homer represents Odysseus as being, reason is stronger than anger.

Often reason is stronger than the spirited part of the soul to such an extent that there is never any conflict between them: The one rules and the other is ruled. This happens with people who have reached the goal of philosophy. Often, however, anger is so much stronger than reason that it rules and completely governs; this is observable in barbarians and children who are spirited by nature, in several wild animals, and in humans who are animal-like. Sometimes neither is sufficiently strong to pull the other over right away; they oppose each other and fight it out, and eventually one of them wins—reason in Odysseus, anger in Medea—since they are two parts of the soul (or, if not parts, at least powers of a sort).

But Chrysippus, who does not think that they are parts of the soul or even irrational powers separate from the rational, still does not hesitate to recall the words of Odysseus and Medea, words that obviously refute his opinion. How can anyone argue with people like this, who pay no attention to what is patently evident (as I have already shown repeatedly) and who bring up things that refute their doctrines as though they were evidence *for* them?

COMMENTS

Galen thinks that Medea is an obvious *counterexample* to the Stoic view; why can't the Stoics just *see* that Medea refutes their theory? He thinks that the idea of distinct parts of the soul, which battle with each other until one wins by superior force, is built into commonsense ways of understanding talk of psychological conflict.

Is Galen moving too fast here? Or is there something to the thought that it is more natural for us, when we talk of reason and emotion conflicting, to think in terms of distinct sources of motivation than to think of the whole person oscillating between different courses?

Galen's language is also meant to recall the picture of the soul as a chariot and horses in Plato's *Phaedrus* (see pp. 82–83). Is he correct in thinking that Plato is committed to this description of Medea? Note that in the *Phaedrus* passage, the bad