

POSIDONIUS
III. THE TRANSLATION
OF THE FRAGMENTS

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 CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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did they at once stop their wild behaviour? For obviously opinions held by their rational faculty were hardly changed through instruction from a musical instrument; but since the emotional element of soul is irrational, they are aroused and calmed through irrational movements. You see, the irrational is helped and harmed by what is irrational, the rational by knowledge and ignorance.

The problem of evil

169 Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, v.459-65, pp. 437.1-444.11 M, pp. 316.21-322.26 De Lacy (v. F160, F153)

Context: See F167, which this fragment follows. F169 is in turn followed immediately by F31.

Structure:

A: The problem of the governing power in children, the facts of whose behaviour cannot be explained by Chrysippus.

B: This behaviour is explained by a theory of natural affinities which comes from Posidonius.

C: Chrysippus therefore cannot solve three difficulties in the problem of evil.

D: Chrysippus' two-fold explanation of the cause of corruption in children is criticised by Galen, who is following Posidonius.

E: Posidonius' explanation of the cause of vice, and how it is that children err.

F: Further amplification of the problems from Posidonius' theory of physiognomy.

G: How vice may be cured.

A

Well, let me confine myself to what is most necessary for the subject before me, and so first address the problem of the governing power of children. It is impossible to say that children's impulses have reason as their guardian, for children don't yet have reason; nor can one say that they are not angry, feel pain and pleasure, laugh, weep and undergo countless other such emotions. For children feel more frequent and more severe emotions than adults.

their wild behaviour? For obviously rational faculty were hardly changed on a musical instrument; but since part of soul is irrational, they are moved through irrational movements. You are helped and harmed by what is irrational knowledge and ignorance.

The problem of evil

Hippocratis et Platonis, v.459-65, pp. 6.21-322.26 De Lacy (v. F160, F153) which this fragment follows. F169 is in turn F31.

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explained by a theory of natural affinities of Posidonius.

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explanation of the cause of corruption in children, Galen, who is following Posidonius.

explanation of the cause of vice, and how it is that

some of the problems from Posidonius' theory

can be

A

turning ourselves to what is most necessary for children, and so first address the problem of the education of children. It is impossible to say that children have reason as their guardian, for they do not have reason; nor can one say that they are moved by pain and pleasure, laugh, weep and suffer such emotions. For children feel more severe emotions than adults.

These facts certainly do not follow logically from Chrysippus' doctrines, just as they don't follow either from his view that there is no natural affinity to pleasure or alienation from pain. But *all* children rush untaught towards pleasures, avert themselves and flee from pains. We see them raging, kicking, biting, wanting to win and boss other children, like some animals, where no other prize is on offer but only victory. Such conduct is obvious in quail, cocks, partridge, ichneumon, asp, crocodile and countless others.

B

So children too seem to have a natural affinity to pleasure and victory,¹²³ just as at some later time they show when they grow up that they have a natural affinity towards moral values. Part proof of this is that they are ashamed as they grow older of their mistakes, are glad in noble actions, lay claim to justice and the other virtues and often act in accordance with their notions of these virtues, whereas before, when they were still small, they lived by emotion, having no care for the commands arising from reason.¹²⁴ So, since these three things to which we have an affinity exist fundamentally by nature, corresponding to each form of the parts of the soul, pleasure through the desiring factor, victory through the passionate factor, morality through the rational factor, Epicurus had eyes only for the affinity of the worst part of the soul, Chrysippus only for that of the best part, maintaining that we had an affinity to what was moral only, which he says is also obviously good. It was the old philosophers only who had their eyes securely on all three affinities¹²⁵ [F160].

¹²³ This is Posidonius' theory; v. F158, F160.

¹²⁴ So F31.

¹²⁵ But since this was also Posidonius' theory, it looks as though Galen took this whole passage from Posidonius, although the terms 'each form of the parts of the soul' were rejected by Posidonius (Frs. 142-6), and must therefore have been imported by Galen.

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C

So by abandoning two of the affinities, Chrysippus naturally has difficulties with the origin of vice; he can't say what its cause is, nor the manner of its constitution, and is incapable of discovering how children err; for all of which Posidonius too reasonably censures and refutes him. For if it were really true that children had a natural affinity to morality right from the beginning, vice could not arise internally from themselves, but would have to come to them from an external source only. But surely, we *see* children going wrong in any case, even if brought up in good habits and properly educated. And even Chrysippus admits precisely that. And yet, I suppose he could have turned a blind eye to plain fact and admitted only what followed from his own assumptions: if children were well brought up, it was bound to follow from that that they would become wise men in due time. But he didn't have the nerve to falsify the facts to *that* extent. No, he does say that even if children were raised under the exclusive guidance of a philosopher, and at no time ever saw or heard any example of vice whatever, even so it did not necessarily follow that they would become wise philosophers.

D

The reason for this is that Chrysippus says that the cause of corruption is two-fold: one arises from oral communication from the majority of men, the second from the very nature of things. I [i.e. Galen] am at a loss with both of these, the one that arises from our circle of acquaintances to begin with. For why don't children, when they see or hear an example of evil, why don't they hate it and run from it, since they have no natural affinity for it? And my surprise increases still more in the case of the other 'cause', when although now neither seeing nor hearing any evil, they are deceived by the things themselves. For what

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two of the affinities, Chrysippus naturally with the origin of vice; he can't say of the manner of its constitution, and is avering how children err; for all of which he reasonably censures and refutes him. For if it is that children had a natural affinity to vice in the beginning, vice could not arise in themselves, but would have to come to them from some source only. But surely, we see children in every case, even if brought up in good habits, are corrupted. And even Chrysippus admits pre-emptively, I suppose he could have turned a blind eye and admitted only what followed from his own point of view: if children were well brought up, it was to be expected that they would become wise. But he didn't have the nerve to falsify the facts. No, he does say that even if children are brought up under the exclusive guidance of a philosopher, he has never seen or heard any example of vice, and so it did not necessarily follow that they were wise philosophers.

D

this is that Chrysippus says that the cause of vice is two-fold: one arises from oral communication, the other from the majority of men, the second from the very same source. I [i.e. Galen] am at a loss with both of these. For why don't children, when they see or hear of a man who is corrupted, that arises from our circle of acquaintances, why don't they hate it and run away from it? For why do they have no natural affinity for it? And my question arises still more in the case of the other source of vice, although now neither seeing nor hearing any example of it, but only deceived by the things themselves. For what

necessity is there that children be enticed by pleasure as a bait if they have no affinity to it, or turn themselves and flee from pain if they are not naturally alienated from it too? Why should children have to fling themselves at and delight in praise and honours, be distressed and run from condemnation and dishonour, if it is true that they actually do not have natural affinity and alienation towards these? If Chrysippus did not actually say so, at least his words seem to imply that he recognised some kind of natural affinity and alienation in us towards each of the foregoing. For when he says that perversion in regard to good and evil in morally imperfect men arises through the persuasiveness of appearances and through communication from others, he must be asked the cause or explanation why pleasure proffers a persuasive appearance of good, and pain of evil. And so too why are we so readily persuaded when we hear winning at the Olympics and the erection of one's statue praised and glorified by the majority as good, and defeat and disgrace as evils? Yes that too is criticised by Posidonius.

E

And Posidonius tries to show that the causes of all false suppositions, when they occur in the contemplative sphere <arise through ignorance, but when they occur in the emotional sphere>¹²⁶ they arise because of the emotional pull; this pull is preceded by false opinions¹²⁷ when the rational faculty has become weak in regard to judgement.

¹²⁶ The Greek makes clear that originally there was an antithesis, part of which has dropped out. I have supplied what seems to me the probable lacuna. See Kidd, *Comm.* pp. 620f.

¹²⁷ Such as pleasure and winning are good and their opposites evil, which Galen outlined above. We have a natural affinity to these, but *simpliciter* they are false judgements; yet this triggers an impulse, which if the rational faculty is in a weak state, becomes an 'overriding impulse', which in turn through its 'emotional pull' demands an 'assent', and so affects a judgement or rational decision to a particular act.

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For he said that while a creature's impulse was sometimes born in the judgemental decision of the rational faculty,¹²⁸ most often it occurs in the movement of the emotional faculty.

F

Posidonius reasonably attaches to this discussion the phenomena from physiognomy: all broad-chested and warmer creatures and humans are more spirited by nature, the broad-hipped and colder, more cowardly. And environment contributes to considerable differences in human character with regard to cowardice, daring, love of pleasure or toil; the grounds for this are that the emotional movements of the soul follow always the physical state, which is altered in no small degree from the temperature in the environment. For he makes the point too that even the blood in animals differs in warmth and coldness, thickness and thinness, and in a considerable number of other different ways, a topic which Aristotle developed at length.¹²⁹ I [i.e. Galen] shall mention them at the appropriate time in the development of the argument, when I include the actual passages from Hippocrates and Plato concerning them. At the moment, my argument is concerned with Chrysippus and his group, who as well as their general ignorance on questions concerning emotions, do not know that different physical temperaments each produce 'emotional movements' peculiar to themselves; 'emotional movements' was the term habitually applied to them by Posidonius [F153]. But Aristotle straight out calls all such settled states of mind in animals 'characters'¹³⁰ and explains in what way they are composed in their different mixtures.¹³¹

¹²⁸ I.e. the impulse towards the morally good.

¹²⁹ E.g. *Pol.* vii.6. 1327b18ff.; and see *De Part. Anim.* 647b30ff., 650b19ff.

¹³⁰ Adopting De Lacy's emendation, ἦθη, for ἦδη HL.

¹³¹ This does not seem to have survived in our Aristotle. Perhaps Galen found the reference to Aristotle in Posidonius.

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G

This is the reason, I believe, why the cure of mental distur-
bance is also in some people welcome and easy because
their emotional movements are not strong, and the rational
is not weak by nature,¹³² nor void of understanding; it is
rather through ignorance and bad habits that such men
are compelled to live by emotions. But with some people
the cure is harsh and rough, when the movements of emo-
tion which necessarily occur through their physical state,
are in fact big and violent, and the rational is by nature
weak and uncomprehending. For two things are necessary
if one is going to demonstrate improvement in a man's
character: (a) the rational aspect must grasp knowledge of
the truth, and (b) the movements of emotion must be
blunted by habituation to good practices.

*Wealth, health and the like are not 'goods' nor 'evils',
but 'advantages'*

170 Seneca, *Epistulae* 87.31-40

Context: From the beginning of his *Letter*, Seneca is arguing that
wealthy trappings are superfluous. Simple necessities are all that
are needed. Precious possessions are lumber. Virtue is sufficient for
the happy life. From §12 a succession of Stoic syllogisms is offered
to prove that riches are not a 'good'. At §28 the following syllogism
is offered: that which involves us in many evils when we desire to
attain it, is not a good. In desiring to attain riches, we become in-
volved in many evils. Therefore riches are not a good. At this point
Seneca brings in his anonymous rhetorical objector, which is char-
acteristic of his style of argument:

(a) (§28) But in desiring to attain virtue, we become involved in
many evils.

(b) (§29) Anyway, if it is through wealth that we become involved
in many evils, wealth is not only not a good, but is positively an
evil. And yet Stoics maintain merely that it is not a good. More-
over, Stoics are accused by the 'objector' of granting that wealth
is of some use, as they count it among 'advantages'; but wealth

¹³² Perhaps because of their physical temperament and physiognomy.