

to himself or, unlike *forensis eloquentia* . . ., offend anyone’) deftly takes into account the parallel of *Ep.* 5.2, where even the modest philosopher is unpopular, and the ambivalent nature of philosophy as both rhetoric and way of life. Concerning 15.5 *Id bonum*, S. notices and explains the non-technical use of the term ‘good’. The introduction to 16.1 (p. 147) draws attention to the subtle transition from talk about the Stoic sage to the more abstract concept of wisdom, in line with the more theoretical nature of the letter. *Ep.* 16.1 *firmandum* is read as an allusion to the previous letter (15.2 *latera firmandi*): ‘While *Ep.* 15 demonstrates what does *not* need strengthening, *Ep.* 16 shows the opposite, namely what is *worth* strengthening’.

Finally, some examples of the effectiveness with which the introductions to single letters clarify the agenda and highlight unusual features. In three terse but information-rich paragraphs (pp. 82–3) S. outlines the politics of *Ep.* 14: the remarkable absence of Nero in this letter and the *Epistulae morales* overall, Stoic theory and practice about political involvement, and the unusually negative portrait of Cato, which S. interprets as a device to enhance the need of complete withdrawal from politics. Another paragraph, in the introduction to *Ep.* 19, addresses Seneca’s opinion on the matter and how the apparent incompatibility between the Stoic view and his advice to retreat from politics is flagged repeatedly in the letters (p. 225). The introduction to *Ep.* 17 underscores how much of a ‘provocation’ (p. 169) the attitude to wealth taken in that letter was and how this is brought out by Lucilius’ paradoxical complaint that wealth ‘delays his study of philosophy’ at the beginning of the letter (p. 170). Another gem is the paragraph about the various forms of Saturnalian reversal in *Ep.* 18 (p. 195), including the fact that Lucilius here appears as the teacher for the first time (even though in this case, one might also say that he has learned the lesson of *Ep.* 5 – see S.’s note on 18.4 *non excerpere se*, p. 206 – and thus becomes capable to judge a controversial question for himself). Evidence is presented that *Ep.* 19, in which Seneca rejoices about Lucilius’ growing determination to retreat, has characteristics of a ‘second proem’ after *Ep.* 1 (pp. 226–7, and in the introduction) and that *Ep.* 21 includes features of a *sphragis* (pp. 270–1). Interesting is also S.’s observation (pp. 249–50) that *Ep.* 20 echoes the joy of *Ep.* 19, but in a subdued tone in line with the cautionary warning to be consistent in one’s actions and choices.

S. has provided students of Seneca, both scholars and beginners, with a valuable study tool that will enhance our understanding and appreciation of Book 2 and Seneca’s art of composition significantly.

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EMOTIONS IN SENECA

RÖTTIG (S.) *Affekt und Wille. Senecas Ethik und ihre handlungspsychologische Fundierung.* (Philosophia Romana 4.) Pp. 388. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2022. Cased, €50. ISBN: 978-3-8253-4932-5.

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This is the published version of a doctoral dissertation produced at Würzburg University. The book is very much a doctoral thesis in style and level of documentation; by the same token, it is a thoroughly researched and up-to-date examination of a substantial topic in

Roman philosophy. R. takes his starting point from Brad Inwood's view (presented in *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* [1985]) that an understanding of human action and psychology is fundamental for Stoic ethics. R.'s project is to establish how far this is also the case for Seneca. A strength of the book is the wide range of Senecan texts and topics R. draws on to address this question, including *De ira*, *De tranquillitate animi*, *De beneficiis* as well as the letters and tragedies.

What are the main themes in this analysis? In the first instance, what do the key terms, 'Affekt' and 'Wille' signify? 'Affekt' (emotion) is largely self-evident in meaning. 'Wille' has two main connotations here. One is the distinctive Stoic unified conception of human psychology, according to which actions and emotions are directly motivated by acceptance of beliefs or thoughts (more precisely, 'impressions', covering a wide set of mental states, including perceptions). This conception is often compared to the modern 'cognitive' theory of motivation to action and emotion. The contrasting ancient (Platonic-Aristotelian) view is that human motives, even if partly shaped by beliefs, also involve the mediation of (non-rational) desire or appetite. The second relevant idea is that of 'good will' (pp. 186–91). Human psychological states such as 'impulses' (or 'motives', *hormai*), both those leading to actions and those provoking emotions, are conceived as ethically laden and as reflecting the wisdom or folly of the person involved. Thus, these two ideas, 'Affekt' and 'Wille', are closely interconnected; and their interconnections take us to the heart of several distinctively Stoic concerns in psychology and ethics.

The first part of the book (entitled 'Das handlungspsychologische Fundament', implying Inwood's view that Stoic action-theory is fundamental for ethics) is focused on 'will' in the first sense, including ideas about emotion. R. tackles the question how far Senecan thought reflects early or orthodox Stoic cognitivism. He acknowledges certain points where Seneca seems to adopt a non-standard Platonic-style psychological dualism or mind-body dualism. However, he is inclined to see these as localised or rhetorical moves rather than as marking a substantive shift of doctrine (a plausible interpretation also adopted by Inwood). A similar claim can be made about Posidonius, though R. accepts the general, though not unchallenged, view that this Stoic thinker reintroduces a type of Platonic psychological dualism. In general, R. regards Senecan thought as reflecting earlier Stoic psychology. Unlike R. Sorabji, for instance, he does not see Seneca's famous treatment of the stages of the arousal of anger (in *De ira* 2.1–4) as marking a significant departure from Chrysippean thought. Similarly, he regards Seneca as following earlier Stoic positions in the debate on whether the ethico-emotional norm should be 'freedom from passions' (*apatheia*) or 'moderation of passions' (*metriopatheia*). Also, he interprets the internal conflict presented in certain Senecan dramas (*Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Thyestes*) as an expression of a – specifically Stoic – 'weakness of will', namely conflict within these figures between their innate human capacity for 'good will' and their misguided passions. R.'s view on this is highly plausible, though he could have signalled more clearly that the relationship between Senecan dramaturgy and Stoic ethical theory remains an open one.

The first part of this book is judicious and informative. However, the second part (broadly entitled 'Die Ethik') is the more original, especially Chapters 3 on *impetus* and 4 on *actio*. Chapter 3 is, in effect, a reconstruction of Seneca's conception of ethical development, in its emotional dimension, which weaves together different strands in Senecan writings. These include the three-stage analysis of the arousal of anger (*De ira* 2.1–4), combined with Seneca's extensive writings on emotional therapy and consolation. R. focuses especially on reconstructing Senecan thinking on the sequential stages of the arousal and counteraction of passions by therapeutic or consolatory discourse. Especially helpful are the tables presenting these stages on pp. 256–7, 279–80, which

spell out the effect of applying *remedia* before or after the arousal of ‘pre-emotions’. R. also underlines the ‘cognitive’ (belief-based) nature of Senecan therapy or consolation. Thus, he highlights the relevance of Seneca’s view that the most effective form of ethical guidance consists in a combination of *decreta* and *praecepta* (Letters 94–5). He also stresses that Stoic therapeutic discourse incorporates (though it is not limited to) advice on what is or is not ethically good and bad. He also accentuates the significance for Seneca (and Roman, and, I think, much Hellenistic, Stoicism) of *exempla*, which provide a medium for reflecting on the ethical significance of specific cases. R. brings out the comprehensive nature of Senecan therapy/consolation, which is directed, in different works, at three major passions, anger, fear and grief or distress. Subsequently (Chapter 5 of this part), R. points to links with Seneca’s discussion of the stages of ethical progress regarding emotions (Letter 75). Taken overall, this discussion provides a comprehensive and well-documented examination of Senecan thinking on the arousal and modification of passions, which also brings out the links to the Stoic theory of value and the cognitive psychological model.

Another suggestive chapter in this part of the book is Chapter 4 on *actio*, centred on *De beneficiis*. M. Griffin did much to bring out the philosophical and social interest of this work, but R. takes this further. He shows that this text (like Cicero’s *De officiis*, with which it has much in common) represents a key source for Stoic practical deliberation. Here, too, R. underlines the importance of the idea of ‘good will’ (*bona voluntas*) as the motivational basis for appropriate actions, specifically actions designed to benefit others. He also offers a useful analysis of the range of questions to be considered by would-be benefactors: on whom, in what way, on what grounds and when, should we confer benefits? This schema usefully complements R.’s analysis of the methods of Seneca’s emotional therapeutics. Thus, R.’s book shows how Seneca’s writings on these subjects add up to a significant body of Stoic-style guidance on the management of emotions and actions, which in turn contributes to understanding Stoic thinking on ethical development, a central preoccupation of their theory.

These are all positive features of this book – what limitations does it have? Philosophically, it seems to me rather under-theorised. For instance, the linkage between the Stoic theory of action and modern cognitivism is unexplored, although it has been discussed at length by M.C. Nussbaum (*Upheavals of Thought* [2001], Chapter 1) and is implicit in works by T. Brennan and M. Graver. Also, the book gives a prominent role to ideas (‘will’ and especially ‘good will’) that are key concepts of Kantian moral theory; and it would be helpful if R. had made it explicit that his understanding of these notions is not specifically Kantian. Also, the subject of emotional therapy has been discussed in depth in scholarship for several decades, starting with I. Hadot’s 1969 study on Senecan ethical guidance and continuing with Nussbaum, Sorabji and so on. These scholarly works are noted; but it would be useful to have a more explicit general statement of the points of difference between this study and previous ones (there are indeed distinctive features, stressed in this review). Also, T. Tieleman’s 2003 book on Chrysippean emotional therapy has material (particularly on Stoic ‘weakness of will’ in Chapter 4) that might have been deployed to explicate this feature in Senecan drama. However, these are minor qualifications regarding a generally valuable and well-prepared study of Senecan thought on a major topic in Stoic theory and one of considerable current interest.

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