

On Anger, on Leisure, on Clemency

author: Seneca

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Synopsis

author	Seneca
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'On Anger' is one of Seneca's most important essays. At some length he investigates the nature of anger: how and why it emerges, the effect it has on the individual and those to whom it is directed, and how to manage it and prevent it even from arising. For, Seneca considers, anger simply serves no purpose - it does not bring courage in war, prevent others misbehaving or punish miscreants. In short it has a negative effect on all.

In 'On Leisure' he takes a short look at what is really meant by the term. 'On Clemency' has a special fascination, for in writing it he was addressing specifically his former pupil, Emperor Nero. Did he realise that the boy he knew - full of promise and beneficence - was to become a tyrant?

While delivering his Stoic advice in his characteristically controlled and reasonable manner, Seneca gives us a remarkably contemporary insight into Roman attitudes and manners. Anger may be inappropriate, but this was a society where slaves, torture, crucifixion, and the right of the powerful to exercise their power at will was taken for granted, as some of Seneca's shocking tales and anecdotes demonstrate!

Reader's comments

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