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NEMESIUS
On the Nature of Man

Translated with an introduction and notes by
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of nature. Aristotle in his works on natural philosophy says that there are five parts of the soul, the vegetative, the sensitive, the locomotive, the appetitive and that concerned with thought: he calls vegetative that of nutrition and growth and (15) what causes generation and the formation of bodies. He also calls the vegetative the nutritive, naming the whole from its most important element, nutrition, to which the other elements in the vegetative owe their existence. That is what he says in the works on nature, but in his ethical works he divides the soul into the two primary and basic kinds, the rational and the non-rational, and he subdivides the non-rational into (20) that which is capable of obeying reason and that which does not listen to reason.

Reason has been discussed in earlier sections, but we shall now make distinctions about the non-rational. 

SECTION 16

ON THE NON-RATIONAL PART OR KIND OF THE SOUL, WHICH IS ALSO CALLED THE AFFECTIVE AND APPETITIVE

Appetite, affection and movement according to impulse. Distinction between what is capable of obeying reason and what is not. Spirit and desire and their location in the heart and the liver. Various definitions of ‘affection’ and ‘activity’.

626 Panaetius of Rhodes (185–109 BCE), main representative of the so-called ‘middle Stoa’; the present passage is fr. 86 van Straaten. For this correction in Stoic doctrine cf. Tertullian, On the Soul 14.2, who says that Panaetius divided the soul into six parts (see the discussion by Waszink [1947] 210–11 and Verbeke [1945] 95). ‘Movement according to impulse’ (kinēsis kath’ hormēn) is discussed by Nemesius in the next section (73.9ff.), generation in section 25 (85.23ff.), where it is said to belong to the part of the soul that is not capable of obeying reason, even though the activity of sexual intercourse belongs to the soul and is within our control.

627 I.e. On the Soul, the Parva Naturalia and the zoological works (esp. On the Parts of Animals and On the Generation of Animals).

628 Aristotle sometimes divides the soul into three ‘parts’, the nutritive (which includes reproduction and growth), the sensitive (which involves locomotion and appetite) and the intellectual parts (On the Soul 415a17), but he also sometimes presents locomotion and appetite as separate faculties (On the Soul 413b12–13, 414a31–32). The term phutikon (‘vegetative’) is not found in On the Soul nor indeed in any of the works on nature (but see 411b28–29; 414a33; 415a3), but it is used in Nicomachean Ethics 1102a33, 1102b29; Eudemian Ethics 1219b37.

629 Nicomachean Ethics 1.13, esp. 1102a27ff. and b28ff.

630 Sections 12 and 14.
Some say that what lacks reason is self-contained, as being a non-rational soul and not a part of the rational one, first because it is found self-contained in non-rational animals, (5) from which it is clear that it is something complete and not part of another soul, next because it is the height of absurdity for the non-rational to be a part of the rational. But Aristotle both calls it a part and a power and divides it into two, as we said. He calls these in common also the appetitive: for to this belongs movement according to impulse. For appetite is the origin of change. For it is through appetite (10) that animals hasten to movement according to impulse.

Of the non-rational, one part does not obey reason, the other is capable of obeying reason. Further what is capable of obeying reason is divided into two, the desirous and the spirited.

631 Kath’ heautên, i.e. ‘on its own’, not part of something else. As Domaniński notes (1900, 114 n.1), this may be a reference to Numenius of Apamea, the 2nd-century CE Neopythagorean philosopher (cf. Stobaeus, Anthology 1.19, p. 350.26–351.4 Wachsmuth: ‘some thinkers, among whom Numenius, think that there are not three parts of one soul, or two, the rational and the non-rational, but that we have two souls, as the others do, the one being rational, the other non-rational’).

632 In the previous section (72.18–19); in On the Soul, Aristotle uses both morion and dunamis, although he is anxious to specify that ‘part’ should not be understood in a spatial sense (432a23ff.).

633 In On the Soul 3.9–11, Aristotle discusses appetite (orexis). He begins by considering this under the rubric of locomotion, and he asks whether this is a separate power of the soul, or even a separate soul altogether (432a18–22). He identifies orexis (or, to be more precise, the object of appetite, to orekton) as the motive force both for rational and non-rational movement, hence common to animals and humans, and he indicates that orexis can also be contrary to reason (433a22–30). As such, Nemesius’ account of the Aristotelian position is not wholly inaccurate (contra Domaniński [1900] 75–76 n.1 and Telfer [1955] 348 n.2).

634 Kinēsis kath’ hormên, a term of Stoic origin (sometimes also rendered as ‘conative movement’), a movement arising from within the organism (as opposed to external force); further down in 87.20ff., Nemesius defines it as a movement which it is in our power to exercise or not exercise (e.g. locomotion, speaking, breathing, as opposed to growing and pulsation which, although arising from within us, are beyond our control); see also section 27 for fuller treatment of this type of movement.

635 Cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1102b29: ‘the part that is non-rational appears twofold, too: for the vegetative (phutikon) has no part in reason at all, but the desiring and, in general, appetitive part (to epithumêtikon kai holôs orektikon), in some way do partake of reason in so far as they are capable of obeying reason and open to persuasion by it’; cf. also 1098a4.

636 Cf. Aëtius/Pseudo-Plutarch, Tenets 4.4 and the discussion by Vander Waerdt (1985) 375. These faculties (epithumia and thumos) and their corresponding physical organs (liver and heart) correspond to the two non-rational faculties of the soul identified by Plato in the Republic and the Timaeus. We take epieiptê in the sense of ‘capable of obeying to reason’, ‘open to persuasion’ (cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 1094a4), for it is quite possible for desire to go against reason.
works through the senses\textsuperscript{637} is the liver, that of spirit the heart, a harsh part which permits vigorous motion assigned to a harsh service (15) and intense impulse, just as the liver, which is a tender internal organ, is the organ of tender desire.\textsuperscript{638} These are called capable of obeying reason, because they are of a nature to obey reason, to be subordinate to it, and to cause movement as reason dictates in the case of men who are in a natural condition.\textsuperscript{639} These affections, too, constitute the existence of a living being:\textsuperscript{640} for without them (20) life cannot be sustained.

But since ‘affection’ has more than one meaning, the ambiguity must first be resolved.\textsuperscript{641} For [the word] ‘affection’ is applied both to what is bodily, such as diseases and wounds, and also what belongs to the soul, which is the subject of the present discussion, which is desire and spirit. An affection of animals is in general that on which pleasure or pain follows.\textsuperscript{642} For while pain follows upon an affection, (25) the affection is not itself pain.\textsuperscript{643} If it were so, then everything affected would also suffer pain, but

\textsuperscript{637} As opposed to the spirited element, whose desires presumably arise from thoughts.

\textsuperscript{638} See previous notes for the Platonic background of this location of spirit in the heart (cf. esp. \textit{Timaeus} 70B1, C1 and D3) and of desire in the liver (ibid.; for the purpose of the liver’s softness see \textit{Timaeus} 71D2). This view on the location was adopted by Galen, and the contrast between the ‘harsh’ (\textit{sklēros}) heart and the ‘tender’ (\textit{hapalos}) liver is a commonplace in Galen (e.g. \textit{Art of Medicine} 12.6 (311.3–13 Boudon, 1.338 K); \textit{On Mixtures} 1.9 (38.20–21 Helmreich, 1.570 K), but we have been unable to find the psychological application that Nemesius here gives to this in Galen.


\textsuperscript{640} Through the desire for food and drink (individual) and sexual desire (species).

\textsuperscript{641} The word \textit{pathos} in Greek can be used for anything that happens to something (e.g. an accident) or is an attribute of something (e.g. a property). When the affected entity is an organism, it can be translated as ‘experience’ or ‘feeling’, and in ethical contexts it is usually rendered as ‘emotion’ or ‘passion’; but the word can also be applied to lifeless objects; and it can refer both to the process of being affected and to the result. Distinctions between these various usages can already be found in Aristotle (e.g. \textit{Metaphysics} 1022b15–21). For the distinction between psychic and somatic affections see Anonymous Londiniensis I.29–II.6, and Galen, \textit{On the Causes of Pulses} 4 (9.157 K); \textit{On Hippocrates’ Epidemics VI} 4.26 (242.25–26 Wenkebach, 17B.210 K); and in medical contexts \textit{pathos} very often refers to physical illness or injury. See Tieleman (2003) 15–16.

\textsuperscript{642} Cf. Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1104b15; 1105b23; Anonymous Londiniensis II.34–36: ‘Of the affections of the soul the two most general ones according to the ancients are pleasure and discomfort’; and Aspasius, \textit{On Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics}, p. 42.27ff. (which presents a debate with various positions being taken on the classification and hierarchy of emotions); see Sorabji (2004), vol. 1, 275–80. See also Plotinus 3.6 [26] 4.

\textsuperscript{643} Cf. Galen, \textit{On the Elements according to Hippocrates} 2.18 (62.15–16 De Lacy, 1.419 K): ‘Surely something that is to feel pain must necessarily meet these two requirements: it
as it is things without sensation are affected without suffering pain: so the pain is not the affection but is the perception of the affection; and this must also be significant if it is to fall under sensation. A definition of an affection of the soul is this: an affection is a perceptible movement in the faculty of appetite on the occasion of an imagination of good or evil. Another is: an affection is a non-rational movement in the soul on account of a supposition of good or evil. Generally they define an affection as follows: an affection is a movement in one thing received from another.

must be capable of undergoing change and capable of sensation’ (tr. De Lacy, modified); 2.43 (66.24–68.2 De Lacy, 1.424 K): ‘if you grant that they are subject to affections but are not sentient, they will not feel pain because they will have no feeling. For, as I said, a thing that is going to feel pain must be affected and must feel the affection (kai paskhein kai tou pathous aisthanesthai)’ (tr. De Lacy); see also On the Causes of Symptoms 1.7 (7.137 K).

644 Telfer (1955, 348) translates: ‘and must be marked enough to call attention to itself’; see also 75.2 below.

645 Exactly this definition is also found in the anonymous commentary On Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics (CAG 20 p. 130.19, on 1105b19ff.), but it is cited without attribution to a specific authority.

646 Exactly this definition is also found in Aspasius in his commentary On Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics p. 44.21–24, where it is attributed to the Peripatetic thinker Andronicus (1st century BCE); and Aspasius himself rejects Andronicus’ definition as too Stoic because of the presence of ‘supposition’, and goes on to give another of his own (45.13–14: ‘a movement of the irrational [part] of the soul by the pleasant or the painful’), which is not noted by Nemesius (see Sorabji [2000] 133–34, and Gottschalk [1987] 1114), which may suggest that Aspasius himself is not Nemesius’ (direct or indirect) source, or else that he or his source did not read Aspasius very carefully. For similarities with the Stoic thinker Chrysippus cf. Diogenes Laërtius, 7.111 (= SVF 2.456) and Galen, On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato 4.2.8 (240.11–17 De Lacy, 5.367–68 K), 4.2.19 (242.12–14 De Lacy, 5.370 K), 4.4.32 (256.32–258.1 De Lacy, 5.389 K), and 5.2.2 (294.29–30 De Lacy, 5.432 K), who, however, criticises Chrysippus for the apparent inconsistency between calling affections ‘non-rational’ and regarding them as forms of judgement involving a ‘supposition’ (hupolêpsis, the term used here by Nemesius) of something good or evil. See De Lacy (1984), vol. 3, 642 (note on p. 240.5–6) and Domaiński (1900) 118 n.2.

647 No subject is specified in the Greek.

648 From here onwards to p. 75.1, Nemesius follows almost literally the distinctions made by Galen in a number of his writings, esp. in On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato 6.1.5–17 (360.22–364.10 De Lacy, 5.506–09 K), of which we quote the relevant sections: ‘Now energeia (activity) is an active motion, that is, motion that comes from the moving object itself; but pathos (affection) is a motion in one thing that comes from another thing … In the same way anger is an energeia (activity) of the spirited part of the soul but a pathêma (affection) of the other two parts, and of our whole body besides, when our body is forcibly driven to its actions by anger … They have another meaning when we think of energeia (activity) as a motion according to nature, and pathos (affection) as a motion contrary to nature … The movement of the heart in pulsation is an energeia (activity), but in palpitation it is a pathos
An activity is a movement involving action. ‘Involving action’ means ‘self-initiated’. Thus anger is also an activity of the spirited element, but also an affection of the [other] two parts of the soul, and further of the whole of our body, (10) when one is led forcibly to actions by anger. For the movement is received by one thing from another, which we said was what an affection was. An activity is also said to be an affection in another way, when it is unnatural. For activity is natural movement, affection the unnatural. And also, according to this account, activity when the movement is not natural is called an affection, (15) whether the movement be self-initiated or by something else. For the motion of the heart, when it moves by pulsation is an activity, but that through palpitations is an affection, for even the motion through palpitation is self-initiated, but is not natural, while that of pulsation is also self-initiated, but natural.\textsuperscript{649} So it is nothing to wonder at that one and the same thing is called both an affection and an activity: (20) in so far as they are movements arising from the affective element in the soul itself they are a sort of activities: in so far as they are immoderate and unnatural they are not activities but affections. Thus a movement in the non-rational part is an affection \textsuperscript{75} in both meanings of the word. But not every movement in the affective part is called an affection, but those that are more violent and reach the senses: for those that are small and unnoticed are not yet affections.\textsuperscript{650} For an affection must have a significant size, which is why the definition of an affection includes being a (5) perceptible movement.\textsuperscript{651} For slight changes escape being noticed and do not produce affections, as said above.

\textsuperscript{649} For the unnaturalness of palpitation (\textit{palmos}) see Galen, \textit{On the Causes of Symptoms} 2.2 (7.159 K); \textit{On Tremor, Palpitation, Convulsion and Rigour} 5 (7.594 K and 598 K).

\textsuperscript{650} This picks up what was said in 74.2–3, although there is some margin for ambiguity here as in 74.1–2 affection was distinguished from the perception of the affection, while here Nemesius suggests that in order to count as an affection, the movement has to be significant; see the definition cited in n.645, and Gottschalk (1987) 1115.

\textsuperscript{651} See n.645.