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THE EDUCATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY AND CITIZEN IN SENECA'S WORKS

Abstract: *in Seneca's works, he explores his understanding of family structure, the positioning of family members' roles, and educational methodologies for both adults and children. Seneca emphasizes the essence of the family as a moral community, advocating for achieving educational goals through rational guidance and emotional regulation. The study combines texts from Epistulae Morales, De Ira, and others to reveal the dynamic balance between punishment and encouragement in his educational philosophy.*

Keywords: *education, family, citizen, punish, encourage, patriotic education.*

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ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ МЕЖДУ СЕМЬЕЙ И ГРАЖДАНИНОМ В ТРУДАХ СЕНЕКИ

Аннотация: *в своих работах Сенека исследует свое понимание структуры семьи, распределения ролей между членами семьи и методик обучения как взрослых, так и детей. Сенека подчеркивает сущность семьи как нравственного сообщества, выступая за достижение образовательных целей посредством рационального руководства и эмоциональной регуляции. В исследовании объединены тексты из «Посланий Моралеса», Де Ира и других авторов, чтобы*

выявить динамический баланс между наказанием и поощрением в его философии образования.

Ключевые слова: образование, семья, гражданин, наказание, поощрение, патриотическое воспитание.

In Senecas works, he explores his understanding of family structure, the positioning of family members roles, and educational methodologies for both adults and children. Seneca emphasizes the essence of the family as a moral community, advocating for achieving educational goals through rational guidance and emotional regulation. The study combines texts from *Epistulae Morales*, *De Ira*, and others to reveal the dynamic balance between punishment and encouragement in his educational philosophy.

1. Order and role positioning of family members.

Seneca viewed the family as a microcosm of the natural order and social responsibility. In *De Beneficis*, he states that the relationships among family members should be based on *mutua officia* rather than power coercion (*De Benef. 3.18.1*) [3, p. 70]. The distribution of these obligations follows the following hierarchy:

1. Father as a rational authority

The father is the «moral exemplar» in the family, whose duty is to convey virtue through words and actions. Seneca wrote in his *Moral Letters*: «A father should teach his son how to live, not how to make money» (*Ep. 94.51*) [1, p. 362]. This role demands that fathers exercise Stoic *apatheia* to control their emotions. «A fathers power should mirror divine reason, guiding through wisdom, not fear» (*Ep. 14.2*) [1, p. 397]. Here, it emphasizes that fathers must govern the household with Stoic «natural reason» (*logos*), avoiding tyranny. *Epistulae Morales* In letter 94, Seneca criticizes fathers who neglect their childrens education: «What is more shameful than a man who plants a tree yet neglects his childs soul?» (*Ep. 94.51*) [1, p. 63] This metaphor suggests that fathers need to nurture their offspring like gardeners tend to plants, irrigating their minds with discipline and knowledge.

2. The emotional modulation role of mother.

Seneca, though less direct in his discussions of mothers, implicitly conveys expectations for the role of motherhood in his texts: In «Consolations to Helvia» (*Ad Helviam Matrem*), Seneca emphasizes that a mother should balance reason and affection with «gentle firmness» (*mites sed constantes*), serving as an emotional anchor for her children (*Helv.* 14.3). In «On Anger» (*De Ira*), he warns mothers against indulging their children: «A mothers tears may drown her childs virtue» (*De Ira*.II.21.6) [2, p. 227] advocates that mothers should maintain a balance between reason and affection, avoiding emotional excesses that can harm their childrens character.

Senecas letter 5 of the *Epistulae Morales* mentions the ideal family manager: «She who orders her household as a philosopher orders his soul brings harmony to both» (*Ep.*5.5) [1, p. 25]. Here, the mothers domestic work is elevated to a philosophical practice, emphasizing the connection between order and self-control.

3. Childrens obedience and independence

Children should «cling to their parents like vines to an oak," but as adults, they should gradually become independent and achieve «self-sufficiency» (*autarkeia*). Seneca warns that «excessive indulgence turns children into perpetual infants» (*Ep.* 4.5) [1, p. 30]. Senecas discussions on children (especially minors) focus on education and obedience: in *On the Shortness of Life*, he states: «Childhood is the clay to be shaped by reason; delay not, lest it harden into folly." (*De Brevitate Vitae*.XIII.2) [4, p. 153], advocating for the cultivation of virtue through early rigorous training (such as studying classics and restraining desires). Seneca believes that childrens education should center on «shaping the soul» (*forma animi*) (*Ep.* 90.44) [1, p. 335]. He opposes mere knowledge imparting and advocates stimulating moral intuition through fables and role models. For example, in *On Benevolence* (*De Clementia*), he suggests using «the diligence of ants» or «the cooperation of bees» to explain social virtues to children (*Clem.* 1.3.5) [4, p. 206].

Senecas Discourse on Adult Children: In the 47th letter of his *Epistulae Morales*, he criticizes adult children for their demands on their parents: «Does a grown son still suckle at his mothers breast? Let him feed himself by labor!» (*Ep.* 47.15) [1, p. 307], emphasizing that adults should be self-reliant and free from material dependence on

the family, achieving Stoic self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*). The core of adult education is «self-correction through philosophy» (Ep. 16.3) [1, p. 62]. In his *On the Shortness of Life* (*De Brevitate Vitae*), Seneca criticizes adults who «use family responsibilities as an excuse to avoid reflection», stressing the necessity of daily self-examination (Brev. 3.5) [4, p. 142]. For example, he suggests that fathers should «first examine whether their souls are clear before teaching their children» (Ep. 25.5) [1, p. 142].

2. Analysis of the educational effect of punishment and encouragement.

(1) The limitation of punishment.

1. Minors: Avoid traumatic punishment.

Seneca opposed corporal punishment, arguing that it would «plant fear in the soul rather than virtue» (Ira 1.15.2) [2, p. 27]. He advocated for alternatives to violence, such as «deprivation of amusement," which is a natural consequence (*naturalia consecutiones*), for example, by canceling playtime for those who neglect their studies (Ep. 123.15) [1, p. 497].

2. Adults: rational error correction mechanism.

For the faults of adult family members, Seneca recommends «silent condemnation» (*tacitus vituperatio*), which involves fostering reflection through detachment (Ep. 75.14) [1, p. 238]. In his *On Anger*, he criticizes husbands who «punish their wives faults with anger», arguing that this only «creates a double wrong» (Ira 3.35.1) [2, p. 90].

(2) Encouraging practical strategies.

1. Minors: concrete praise.

Seneca emphasizes the affirmation of a child's specific actions rather than his or her personality. For example, when a child shares food, he or she is praised with «Your generosity today is like that of a true friend» (Ep. 81.17) [1, p. 267].

2. Adults: Intrinsic motivation.

Encouragement for adults should focus on «the value of virtue itself». In his *On Grace*, he advocates using phrases like «you have proven yourself worthy of freedom» to motivate spouses or parents, rather than material rewards (Benef. 2.35.2) [3, p. 57]. Seneca's views on family education embody the dual principles of Stoic

philosophy: «adapting to nature» and «rational guidance». By balancing punishment and encouragement dynamically and distinguishing between adult and child educational goals, he constructed a family ethics system centered on virtue cultivation. This idea has implications for later humanistic education (such as Erasmus) and modern developmental psychology. However, Senecas discussions on family life conflict with reality; as Neros tutor, he failed to prevent the royal tragedy of regicide (such as Nero killing his mother), leading Tacitus to mock him as the «moralists silence» (Annals XIV.7). Additionally, Seneca narrows the role of mothers to «housewives," neglecting womens autonomy, which reflects the imprint of Roman patriarchy and has its limitations.

B) Senecas civic education.

Senecas systematic conception of civic education focuses on the connotation of patriotism, the practice of cross-cultural inclusiveness and the cultivation of political decision-making responsibility. It reveals the critical reshaping of his civic education thought to ancient Roman public life.

I. The Dual Dimensions of Patriotism: Responsibility Ethics and Worldism.

Senecas patriotism transcends narrow nationalism, emphasizing the combination of civic responsibility to the community and the consciousness of human community.

1. Patriotism as «rational service».

In *Epistulae Morales* Seneca defines patriotism as «serving the city with virtue» (*virtute civitati servire*), opposing blind obedience to state will. He writes, «A true patriot is one who corrects his countrys mistakes, not one who praises its flaws» (Ep. 94.46) [1, p. 361]. This stance calls for citizens to engage in public affairs through philosophical reflection, rather than emotional loyalty.

2. Indigenous responsibility within a cosmopolitan framework.

Seneca proposed the «dual citizenship theory» in *De Beneficiis*: citizens are both Romans and *mundanus civis*, so acts of patriotism should encompass concern for *commune humani generis bonum* (Benef. 4.18.1) [3, p. 97]. For example, he praised Roman officials who «strive for fair trials for foreigners," considering this «a higher form of patriotism» (Benef. 3.28.2) [3, p. 75].

2. Education of cultural tolerance: from «cognitive difference» to «rational empathy».

Seneca advocated the dissolution of cultural prejudice and the cultivation of citizens intercultural understanding through philosophical education.

Critique cultural centrism.

In his letter to Lucius (Ep. 95) [1, p. 367], he satirizes the Romans contempt for Egyptian religion: «When you mock their worship of crocodiles, have you ever considered how absurd your war gods spear is compared to Jupiters thunder?» (Ep. 95.47) [1, p. 376]. This critique aims to reveal the relativity of cultural practices.

2. Inclusiveness based on common sense

Seneca points out in De Ira that conflicts between different cultures stem from «different expressions of the same reason» (Ira 2.28.3) [2, p. 53]. He advises citizens to study foreign laws and philosophies, such as understanding the «diversity of views on death» through the study of Egypts Book of the Dead (Ep. 117.5) [1, p. 464], thereby establishing «consensus in diversity».

3. Cultivation of political decision-making responsibility: practical rationality from legislation to election.

1. Responsible attitude towards participation in the Peoples Congress.

Seneca criticizes the shortsightedness of Roman citizens in their legislative activities: «They cheer for free bread but turn a blind eye to financial bankruptcy» (Ep. 73.10) [1, p. 227]. He advocates that citizens should be trained in public debate, including:

- Logical analysis: distinguishing between utilitas apparens and vera felicitas (Ep. 118.5–7) [1, p. 473].

- Historical awareness: understanding the «long-term consequences of law» through the study of the Roman Annals (Ep. 108.32) [1, p. 433].

2. Ethical responsibility in the election of officials.

In his Discourse on Mercy, Seneca proposes three criteria for the election of officials:

– Virtue is superior to eloquence: «I would rather choose the wise man of silence than the cunning man of eloquence» (Clem. 1.1.6) [4, p. 189].

– Corruption resistance test: assessment of candidates through hypothetical situations (e.g., bribery temptation) (Clem. 2.2.1) [4, p. 190].

– Public service motivation: examine whether it is «a burden rather than a reward» (Ep. 84.11) [1, p. 286].

3. Framework for in-depth analysis of decisions.

Seneca designed a set of civic decision-making training methods:

– Multi-perspective analysis (*circumspectio*): citizens are required to present at least three opposing views in the debate (Ep. 88.42) [1, p. 317].

– Consequences: use «chains of assumptions» to predict long-term effects of decisions, such as «reduce soldiers pay → lower army morale → border crisis» (Ep. 120.15) [1, p. 482].

– Ethical review (*probatio moralis*): testing policies using Stoic principles of «natural law», such as examining whether tax laws violate «natural equality» (Ep. 90.38) [1, p. 333].

4. Practice path of civic education: from individual to community.

1. Individual level: philosophy as «soul gymnastics».

Seneca called on citizens to do *philosophiae examen* daily in *De Brevitate Vitae*, including:

– Ask yourself when planning your morning: «Does my decision today contribute to the public good?» (Brev. 7.3) [4, p. 146];

– Review at night: «Have I put my private interests above those of the city?» (Ep. 28.10) [1, p. 98].

2. At the level of the community: rationalization of public space.

He proposed to reform the Roman system of civic assemblies:

– Establish *tempus refrigerii*: mandatory three-day recess after legislative debate to avoid impulsive decisions (Ira 1.19.4) [2, p. 31];

– Introduction of *consilium sapientium*: ethical assessment of major policies by Stoic scholars (Ep. 64.9) [1, p. 184].

Senecas civic education system is grounded in the rationalism of Stoic philosophy and universal ethics, aiming to address the public spirit crisis of late Roman Empire by reconstructing patriotism, cultural tolerance, and political decision-making capabilities. His ideas not only provide a model for ancient civic education but also offer valuable insights into responsibility education in modern civil society and cross-cultural governance.

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