



# Medicine and Practical Ethics in Galen

Sophia Xenophontos



## MEDICINE AND PRACTICAL ETHICS IN GALEN

Galen was notable in the ancient world for his creative intermingling of medicine and practical ethics. This book is the first authoritative analysis of Galen's psychological and ethical works alongside a large number of his technical tracts, both medical and philosophical, and offers a robust framework through which we can comprehend his role as a practical ethicist – an aspect of his intellectual profile that has been little understood until now. Sophia Xenophontos explores a wide range of literature on *moralia* in the Roman Imperial period, as well as topics including the pathology of emotions, the social role of medicine, and character formation and social ethics, to show the sophisticated and complex ways in which moral themes and controversies from antiquity were adapted and reinvigorated by Galen. This title is also available as open access on Cambridge Core.

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103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009247801](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009247801)

DOI: [10.1017/9781009247795](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009247795)

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First published 2024

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress*

ISBN 978-1-009-24780-1 Hardback

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*Θεοτόκη*

For this reason it behoves us to transfer wisdom into medicine and medicine into wisdom (μετάγειν τὴν σοφίην ἐς τὴν ἰητρικὴν καὶ τὴν ἰητρικὴν ἐς τὴν σοφίην). For a physician being a philosopher is like a god (ἰητρὸς γὰρ φιλόσοφος ἰσόθεος).

[Hippocrates], *Decorum* 5, 27.1-3 Heiberg = IX.232.8-10 Littré



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## *Acknowledgements*

This book is the main output of a Wellcome Trust University Award in the Humanities and Social Sciences, a five-year grant which enabled me to undertake a research project on Galen as Principal Investigator (Reference Number: 208106/A/17/Z), first as Lecturer in Classics at the University of Glasgow and later on as Associate Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where I am currently based. I am most grateful to the Wellcome Trust not just for choosing to fund this research from among a large pool of other highly competitive projects in the Medical Humanities from all over the UK, but also for supporting research trips, my participation in scholarly events and the organisation of an international conference attached to this project. I am also indebted to the Trust for covering the Open Access fees for this monograph, thus significantly enhancing its accessibility.

An earlier version of [Chapter 4](#) was published as ‘Psychotherapy and Moralising Rhetoric in Galen’s Newly Discovered *Avoiding Distress (Peri Alypias)*’ in *Medical History* 58.4 (2014) pp. 585–603, while an earlier version of [Chapter 5](#) appeared as ‘Galen’s *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*: An Educational Work for Prospective Medical Students’ in the volume *Greek Medical Literature and its Readers: From Hippocrates to Islam and Byzantium*, London-New York: Routledge, edited by P. Bouras-Vallianatos and S. Xenophontos in 2018, pp. 67–93. In both cases the versions featuring in this book are revised and augmented and are thus to be preferred.

The final manuscript was thoroughly read and incisively commented on by Petros Bouras-Vallianatos, Jason König, Chris Pelling and Michael Trapp, from whose suggestions and criticism I have greatly benefitted. I could not have had more excellent readers. Profound thanks are also due to the two anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press and to the editor Hilary Gaskin.

This book was written during the most exciting period ever, when my son, Theotokis, first appeared in my life to give it a new direction and change it for ever. This book is dedicated to him.

## *Conventions and Abbreviations*

References to Galen's works consist of:

- (i) the title of the work (abbreviated or in full) followed by
- (ii) book and/or chapter numbers as per the traditional division (where applicable),
- (iii) page and line number of the most recent edition (if one is available) and/or
- (iv) the (corresponding) location in Kühn's collected edition (where applicable; volume in Roman numerals, page and line in Arabic numerals)

Some examples:

*PHP* 9.7, 590.2-11 De Lacy = V.782.3-14 K. (=Kühn) refers to De Lacy's edition of the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, Book 9, ch. 7, p. 590, ll. 2-11, which corresponds to volume V, p. 782, ll. 3-14 in Kühn's edition.

*Diff. Puls.* 3, VIII.636.1-8 K. (=Kühn) refers to a section from ch. 3 of *The Different Kinds of Pulse*, covering ll. 1-8 on p. 636 in volume VIII of Kühn's edition. *The Different Kinds of Pulse* has yet to be edited by any scholar other than Kühn.

*Med. Exp.* 9.2, 18.4-8 Walzer corresponds to ch. 9, paragraph 2 of *Medical Experience*, which extends from l. 4 to l. 8 of p. 18 in Walzer's edition. *Medical Experience* is not included in Kühn.

*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 47.11-12 Iskandar is a segment of section 1 to be found in ll. 11-12, p. 47 of Iskandar's edition of the Arabic translation of *Recognising the Best Physician*. The original work does not survive in Greek.

The same referencing system is applied to Hippocratic texts and the works of other medical authors.

Throughout the book Galenic passages quoted from the original follow the most recent edition. Thus, where variant readings exist, these are taken from the latter, unless otherwise stated. Square brackets [...] indicate

deletions by the editor(s), whereas angle brackets <...> enclose letters or words added by the editor(s).

I cite proper names of ancient authors and their works according to LSJ (9th edition. Oxford, 1940; revised supplement, Oxford, 1996) and  *OCD* (S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition. Oxford, 2012). By convention, texts in the Hippocratic Corpus are referred to as being by [Hippocrates].

Transliteration of Greek terms follows the Library of Congress system: <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/greek.pdf> (last accessed: 31 January 2023).

The capitalised form ‘Chapter’ refers to a particular chapter of this book, whereas the uncapitalised form ‘chapter’ is reserved for sections of Galen’s or another author’s writings. In this book, ‘ethics’ and ‘morality’, ‘ethical’ and ‘moral’ are used interchangeably, reflecting the overall lack of modern consensus as to how these pairs should be compartmentalised. The same holds for ‘passions’, ‘emotions’ and less frequently ‘affections’ and ‘feelings’, which are also used indistinguishably as the English renderings for the Greek *pathē* (see e.g. Fitzgerald 2008: 2–5 and Singer 2021: 157, n. 6). I refrain from using the renderings ‘sentiment’ or ‘suffering’.

The following abbreviations are used to refer to modern reference works, editions or series:

- CMG* *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*. Berlin, 1908 – .
- DG* Diels, H. (ed.), *Doxographi Graeci*, Berlin, 1879.
- DK* Diels, H. and W. Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edition. Zurich, 1968–1970.
- EANS* *Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists: The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P. Keyser and G. Irby-Massie. London-New York, 2008.
- LSJ* Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. J. Jones (eds.), *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford, 1940. Revised Supplement, ed. P. G. W. Glare with the assistance of A. A. Thompson. Oxford, 1996.
- PCG* *Poetae Comici Graeci*, 8 volumes, ed. R. Kassel and C. Austin. Berlin, 1983–2001.
- PIR*<sup>2</sup> *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*
- SVF* Von Arnim, H. (ed.), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. 4 vols. Leipzig, 1903–1924.
- TrGF* *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 5 vols. (Göttingen, 1971–2004): vol. 1, *Didascaliae tragicarum, catalogi tragicorum minorum*, ed. B. Snell (1971); vol. 2, *Fragmenta adespota*,

*testimonia, etc.*, ed. R. Kannicht and B. Snell (1981); vol. 3, *Aeschylus*, ed. S. Radt (1985); vol. 4, *Sophocles*, ed. S. Radt, 2nd edition (1999); vol. 5, *Euripides*, ed. R. Kannicht, 2nd edition in 2 parts (2004).

Abbreviations for editions of Galenic texts most frequently referred to:

- B. V. Boudon (ed.), *Galien, Exhortation à l'étude de la médecine*. Paris: Belles Lettres, 2000.
- Ba. A. Bazou (ed.), *Γαληνοῦ Ὅτι ταῖς τοῦ σώματος κράσεις αἰ τῆς ψυχῆς δυνάμεις ἔπονται*. Athens: Academy of Athens, 2011.
- BM V. Boudon-Millot (ed.), 'Un traité perdu de Galien miraculeusement retrouvé, le *Sur l'inutilité de se chagriner*: Texte grec et traduction française', in V. Boudon-Millot, A. Guardasole and C. Magdelaine (eds.), *La Science médicale antique: Nouveaux regards; études réunies en l'honneur de Jacques Jouanna*. Paris: Beauchesne, 2007, 73–123, at 87–102.
- DB W. De Boer (ed.), *Galen De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione; De animi cuiuslibet peccatorum dignotione et curatione; De atra bile*. Leipzig and Berlin: in aedibus Teubneri [CMG V 4,1,1], 1937.
- DL Ph. De Lacy (ed.), *Galen De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag [CMG V 4,1,2, vols. 3], 1978–1984.
- I. A. Z. Iskandar (ed.), *Galen De optimo medico cognoscendo libelli versio Arabica*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag [CMG Suppl. Or. IV], 1988.
- K. K. G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, 20 vols in 22. Leipzig: Carl Cnobloch, 1821–1833.
- Ko. K. Koch (ed.), *Galen De sanitate tuenda*. Berlin: in aedibus B. G. Teubner [CMG V 4,2], 1923.
- Kr. P. Kraus (ed.), 'Kitāb al-akhlāq li-Jālīnūs', *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University* 5.1 (1939) 1–51.
- L. É. Littré (ed.), *Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*, 10 vols. Paris: J. B. Baillière, 1839–1861.
- M. F. Marx (ed.), *A. Cornelii Celsi quae supersunt*. Leipzig et Berlin: in aedibus Teubneri [CML I], 1915.
- N. V. Nutton (ed.), *Galen De praecognitione*. Berlin: in aedibus Teubneri [CMG V 8,1], 1979.
- PX I. Polemis and S. Xenophontos (eds.), *Galen, On Avoiding Distress and On My Own Opinions*. Edited by Ioannis Polemis and Sophia

Xenophontos. Translated by Sophia Xenophontos. Berlin: Trends in Classics Supplementary Volumes (151), 2023. [open access: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783111320816/html>; last accessed 23 August 2023].

- WP E. Wenkebach and F. Pfaff (eds.), *Galen in Hippocratis sextum librum Epidemiarum commentaria I-VI*. Berlin: in aedibus Academiae litterarum [CMG V 10,2,2], 1956.

#### Translations:

All translations of *Avoiding Distress* cited throughout are my own. They come from PX above (freely accessible at: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783111320816/html>; last accessed 23 August 2023). Translations of *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, *Character Traits* and *The Capacities of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body* are taken from Singer 2013. Those of the *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* come from Singer 1997 with modifications; those of *Prognosis* are by Nutton 1979 sometimes with minor alterations. Translations of the other Galenic passages cited in this book follow, often with minor changes, the standard modern translations, unless otherwise indicated. The same goes for translations of all other ancient authors. For Galenic works that remain untranslated, the translations provided are mine.

Abbreviations of Galen's works used in this book are provided below. A full list may be found in Singer (2013: 431–444) and in G. Fichtner's Bibliography of the Galenic and pseudo-Galenic corpus, accessible through the CMG website (<http://cmg.bbaw.de/online-publications/hippocrates-und-galenbibliographie-fichtner>; last accessed 31 January 2023). Pseudo-Galenic or dubious works are enclosed in square brackets.

Abbreviation	Latin Title	English Title
AA	<i>De anatomicis administrationibus</i>	<i>Anatomical Procedures</i>
<i>Adv. Jul.</i>	<i>Adversus Julianum</i>	<i>Against Julian</i>
<i>Aff. Pecc. Dig.</i>	<i>De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione</i>	<i>Affections and Errors of the Soul</i>
<i>Alim. Fac.</i>	<i>De alimentorum facultatibus</i>	<i>The Capacities of Foodstuffs</i>
<i>Ars Med.</i>	<i>Ars medica</i>	<i>The Art of Medicine</i>
<i>Art. Sang.</i>	<i>An in arteriis natura sanguis contineatur</i>	<i>Whether Blood is Naturally Contained in the Arteries</i>

(cont.)

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Latin Title</i>	<i>English Title</i>
<i>Bon. Hab.</i>	<i>De bono habitu</i>	<i>Good Condition</i>
<i>Bon. Mal. Suc.</i>	<i>De bonis malisque sucis</i>	<i>Good Humour and Bad Humour</i>
<i>CAM</i>	<i>De constitutione artis medicae ad Patrophilum</i>	<i>The Composition of the Art of Medicine, Addressed to Patrophilus</i>
<i>Caus. Symp.</i>	<i>De symptomatum causis</i>	<i>Causes of Symptoms</i>
<i>Comp. Med. Gen.</i>	<i>De compositione medicamentorum per genera</i>	<i>The Composition of Drugs According to Kind</i>
<i>Comp. Med. Loc.</i>	<i>De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos</i>	<i>The Composition of Drugs According to Places</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>De causis procatartictis</i>	<i>Antecedent Causes</i>
<i>Cons.</i>	<i>De consuetudinibus</i>	<i>On Habits</i>
<i>Cris.</i>	<i>De crisibus</i>	<i>On Crises</i>
<i>Cur. Rat. Ven. Sect.</i>	<i>De curandi ratione per venae sectionem</i>	<i>Treatment by Bloodletting</i>
<i>De Mor.</i>	<i>De moribus</i>	<i>Character Traits</i>
<i>Di. Dec.</i>	<i>De creticis diebus</i>	<i>Critical Days</i>
<i>Dig. Puls.</i>	<i>De dignoscendibus pulsibus</i>	<i>Diagnosis by the Pulse</i>
<i>Diff. Feb.</i>	<i>De februm differentiis</i>	<i>The Different Kinds of Fever</i>
<i>Diff. Puls.</i>	<i>De differentiis pulsuum</i>	<i>The Different Kinds of Pulse</i>
<i>Diff. Resp.</i>	<i>De difficultate respirationis</i>	<i>Difficulty in Breathing</i>
<i>Gloss.</i>	<i>Glossarium</i>	<i>Glossary of Hippocratic Terms</i>
<i>Hipp. Aph.</i>	<i>In Hippocratis Aphorismos</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Aphorisms'</i>
<i>Hipp. Art.</i>	<i>In Hippocratis De articulis</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Joints'</i>
<i>Hipp. Elem.</i>	<i>De elementis ex Hippocrate</i>	<i>The Elements According to Hippocrates</i>
<i>Hipp. Epid. I</i>	<i>In Hippocratis epidemiarum librum I</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Epidemics I'</i>
<i>Hipp. Epid. III</i>	<i>In Hippocratis epidemiarum librum III</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Epidemics III'</i>
<i>Hipp. Epid. IV</i>	<i>In Hippocratis epidemiarum librum IV</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Epidemics IV'</i>
<i>Hipp. Epid. VI</i>	<i>In Hippocratis epidemiarum librum VI</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Epidemics VI'</i>
<i>Hipp. Progn.</i>	<i>In Hippocratis prognosticum</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Prognostic'</i>
<i>Hipp. Prorrh.</i>	<i>In Hippocratis De praedictionibus</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Prorrhetics'</i>
<i>[Hist. Phil.]</i>	<i>[Historia Philosophica]</i>	<i>[History of Philosophy]</i>
<i>HNH</i>	<i>In Hippocratis De natura hominis</i>	<i>Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Nature of Man'</i>
<i>Ind.</i>	<i>De indolentia</i>	<i>Avoiding Distress</i>
<i>Lib. Prop.</i>	<i>De libris propriis</i>	<i>On My Own Books</i>
<i>Loc. Aff.</i>	<i>De locis affectis</i>	<i>Affected Places</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>De methodo medendi</i>	<i>Therapeutic Method</i>



(cont.)

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Latin Title</i>	<i>English Title</i>
MMG	<i>Ad Glauconem de methodo medendi</i>	<i>Therapeutics to Glaucon</i>
<i>Med. Exp.</i>	<i>De experientia medica</i>	<i>Medical Experience</i>
<i>Mot. Dub.</i>	<i>De motibus dubiis</i>	<i>On Problematical Movements</i>
<i>Musc. Diss.</i>	<i>De musculorum dissectione</i>	<i>The Dissection of Muscles</i>
<i>Nat. Fac.</i>	<i>De naturalibus facultatibus</i>	<i>Natural Faculties</i>
<i>Opt. Doct.</i>	<i>De optima doctrina</i>	<i>The Best Method of Teaching</i>
<i>Opt. Med.</i>	<i>Quod optimus medicus sit quoque philosophus</i>	<i>The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher</i>
<i>Opt. Med. Cogn.</i>	<i>De optimo medico cognoscendo</i>	<i>Recognising the Best Physician</i>
<i>Opt. Sect.</i>	<i>De optima secta</i>	<i>The Best Sect</i>
<i>Ord. Lib. Prop.</i>	<i>De ordine librorum propriorum</i>	<i>The Order of My Own Books</i>
<i>Part. Art. Med.</i>	<i>De partibus artis medicativae</i>	<i>The Parts of the Art of Medicine</i>
<i>Parv. Pil.</i>	<i>De parvae pilae exercitio</i>	<i>The Exercise with the Small Ball</i>
PHP	<i>De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis</i>	<i>Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato</i>
<i>Plen.</i>	<i>De plenitudine</i>	<i>Fullness</i>
<i>Praen.</i>	<i>De praecognitione</i>	<i>Prognosis</i>
<i>Praes. Puls.</i>	<i>De praesagitione ex pulsibus</i>	<i>Prognosis by the Pulse</i>
<i>Prolaps.</i>	<i>De humero iis modis prolapso quos Hippocratis non vidit</i>	<i>Dislocations not Seen by Hippocrates</i>
<i>Prop. Plac.</i>	<i>De propriis placitis</i>	<i>My Own Opinions</i>
<i>Protr.</i>	<i>Protrepticus</i>	<i>Exhortation to the Study of Medicine</i>
<i>Purg. Med. Fac.</i>	<i>De purgantium medicamentorum facultate</i>	<i>The Capacity of Cleansing Drugs</i>
QAM	<i>Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequuntur</i>	<i>The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body</i>
<i>San. Tu.</i>	<i>De sanitate tuenda</i>	<i>Matters of Health</i>
<i>Sem.</i>	<i>De semine</i>	<i>Semen</i>
SMT	<i>De simplicium medicamentorum ac facultatibus</i>	<i>The Capacities of Simple Drugs</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>De sophismatibus penes dictionem</i>	<i>Linguistic Sophisms</i>
<i>Subf. Emp.</i>	<i>Subfiguratio empirica</i>	<i>Outline of Empiricism</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>De temperamentis</i>	<i>On Mixtures</i>
[ <i>Ther. Pis.</i> ]	[ <i>De Theriaca ad Pisonem</i> ]	[ <i>Theriac, To Piso</i> ]
<i>Thras.</i>	<i>Thrasylbulus sive utrum medicinae sit an gymnasticae hygiene</i>	<i>Thrasylbulus: Is Healthiness a Part of Medicine or of Gymnastics?</i>
UP	<i>De usu partium</i>	<i>The Function of the Parts of the Body</i>
<i>Ven. Sect. Er. Rom.</i>	<i>De venae sectione adversus Erasistrateos Romae degentes</i>	<i>Bloodletting, Against the Erasistrateans at Rome</i>



## *Introduction*

### *Galen, the Unsuspected Moralist*

This study is devoted to the ancient medical theorist and practising physician Galen of Pergamum (129–ca. 216 AD), whose fundamental contributions to specialised branches of the medical art (e.g. anatomy, physiology) made him an authoritative model in the field of medicine up to the seventeenth century. Taking his cue from his idealised master Hippocrates, the father of medicine in classical antiquity, Galen married medicine with philosophy, thereby establishing a robustly scientific system for researching, teaching and writing about the workings of the human body and the origins and treatment of disease.<sup>1</sup> In this way Galen seems to have actualised what he fervently proclaimed in his short essay *The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher*, namely that the ideal physician should be armed with logic, physics and ethics, the three structural pillars of philosophical discourse in antiquity.<sup>2</sup>

Yet Galen is exceptional in other respects too. He is antiquity's most voluminous author, with his output surviving in Greek (there is more in Latin, Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew) filling twenty-two massive volumes<sup>3</sup> in Karl Gottlob Kühn's nineteenth-century edition, an extraordinary number by any standard, whether ancient or modern.<sup>4</sup> Such sheer quantity is

<sup>1</sup> We are fortunate to have three dedicated biographies of Galen by Nutton (2020), Mattern (2013) and Boudon-Millot (2012). Cf. Schlange-Schöningen (2003). For a concise overview of his life and career, see Hankinson (2008). Moraux (1985) provides a representative collection of passages from the Galenic corpus that help build a picture of Galen's experiences and opinions. On the interconnection between medicine and philosophy in Galen, see succinctly Boudon-Millot (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Ierodiakonou (1993), Trapp (2017: 31–32).

<sup>3</sup> This amounts to around 20,000 pages of printed text.

<sup>4</sup> Galen's exceptional productivity was well known in antiquity, e.g. Athenaeus, *The Sophists at Dinner* (early third c. AD) 1.1e states that Galen of Pergamum has 'published more works on philosophy and medicine as to surpass all his predecessors'. See Nutton (1984: 317–318) and especially Nutton (2008: 358–359). On Galen's early reception, see Pietrobelli (2019). Boudon-Millot (2017) mentions 500 treatises attributed to Galen, and Nutton (2013: 391, n. 21) estimates that Galen's 'writings in Greek amount to approximately 10 per cent of all surviving Greek literature before AD 350'.

already reflected in the (also rare) autobiographical inventories that he composed to authenticate his writings, in an attempt to stop what we would term intellectual property theft. Galen's productivity comes with notable diversity in subject matter, form and orientation, from didactic manuals on anatomical, therapeutic and prognostic theory at varying levels, to Hippocratic commentaries, polemical tracts against individuals and medical sects (e.g. the Methodists), (exegetical) works on Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy, as well as texts on demonstration, lexicography and philology.

Interestingly, his oeuvre includes a distinct body of works on moral philosophy (περὶ τῶν τῆς ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας ἐζητημένων), which comprises twenty-three titles of ethical tracts, catalogued in his *On My Own Books*.<sup>5</sup> Of these works, three have come down to us: *Affections and Errors of the Soul* (περὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἐκάστῳ παθῶν καὶ ἀμαρτημάτων τῆς διαγνώσεως, in Greek)<sup>6</sup>, *Character Traits* (περὶ ἡθῶν, in Arabic summary) and the long-lost *Avoiding Distress* (περὶ ἀλυπίας, in Greek). The majority of the other book titles taken together point to these texts' affinity with essays on applied or practical ethics, a fashionable philosophical product by Galen's time, though the genre goes back to the Hellenistic period.<sup>7</sup> As the name suggests, practical ethics sought to offer handy tips on how to think about the world and conduct oneself in it, so as to cope effectively with the hardships of everyday life. It also furnished advice on how to take care of one's body and soul, face the challenges arising from politics and other professional activities, and handle potential frictions and tensions while connecting with peers, friends and family. In doing so, it transcended scholarship and special interests, extending into the realm of human relationships in an accessible manner that moral learners could easily make sense of, regardless of their professional expertise. Practical ethics is also known as popular philosophy,<sup>8</sup> not because it is addressed to the masses or

<sup>5</sup> *Lib. Prop.* 15, 169.13 Boudon-Millot = XIX.45.10-11 K. <sup>6</sup> See also n.1, Chapter 6.

<sup>7</sup> Gill (2003: 40-44).

<sup>8</sup> *Popularphilosophie* ('popular philosophy') or *Die popularphilosophisch-ethischen Schriften* (the 'popular philosophical-ethical writings') are terms coined by Ziegler (1951: 637, 702) with reference to Plutarch's works on practical ethics. For *Popularphilosophie* specifically, Ziegler was most probably inspired by the application of the same term to works of the German *Aufklärung* in the second half of the eighteenth century; see Holzhey (1989). The term *praktische Seelenheilungsschriften* ('practical psychotherapeutic writings') was also deployed by Ingenkamp (1971) for his analysis of Plutarch's *On the Control of Anger, On Talkativeness, On Curiosity, On Compliance* and *On Praising Oneself Inoffensively*; while 'broadcasting ethics' has been recently devised by Roskam and van der Stockt (2011) for the same purposes.

because it involves a lower level of sophistication,<sup>9</sup> but because of its appeal to a broader category of readers/listeners, who were nevertheless educated enough to be attentive to their character development and self-management.<sup>10</sup> Though theoretical moral philosophy emanated from and spoke to a restricted group of philosophical specialists, practical ethics reached out to a much larger audience as ‘a life-project to which any thinking person ought to feel obliged to subscribe’.<sup>11</sup>

Galen’s moral works fall squarely within this generic tradition. As can be surmised from their titles, they concern three interrelated areas: first, the regulation of conduct in daily cultural practices, such as rhetorical demonstrations in the forum or private discussions in aristocratic villas.<sup>12</sup> Second, the mitigation of negative emotions especially germane to elite life in the High Roman Empire, for example, slander, flattery, love of honour or desire for fame.<sup>13</sup> And third, the cultivation of

<sup>9</sup> Thus, ‘popular’ meaning ‘less- or non-doctrinaire’, ‘commonsensical’, and not ‘folk’, ‘demotic’, ‘populist’ or ‘vulgar’. On the meaning of ‘popular’ in popular philosophy and ethics in the Imperial period, see Morgan (2007: 1–5) and van Hoof (2010: 6–7). Cf. Goulet-Cazé (2007) and Thom (2012). For a definition and description of the independent discipline of practical ethics, see van Hoof (2014); cf. Schofield (2003: 253–256) and van der Stockt (2011: 19–21).

<sup>10</sup> Hence, Pelling (2011: 55–58) appositely suggested the alternative label ‘educated ethics’, which includes ‘material for the cultured, educated, sensible person to work on and exploit’ (p. 57).

<sup>11</sup> Trapp (2014: 45). See also the similar emphasis on the practical appeal of moral philosophy in the pseudo-Galenic work *History of Philosophy* 1–2, 597.1–598.16 DG = XIX.223.1–224.17 K.; [*Hist. Phil.*] 4, 602.12–603.6 DG = XIX.231.1–16 K.; [*Hist. Phil.*] 6, 603.14–20 DG = 232.10–18 K.

<sup>12</sup> *The Interaction Between Someone Making Public Demonstrations and Their Audience* (περὶ τῆς τῶν ἐπιδεικνυμένων <πρὸς> τοὺς ἀκούοντας συνουσίας), *To Orators in the Forum* (πρὸς τοὺς ἀγοραίους ῥήτορας), *The Interaction Between the Parties to a Dialogue* (περὶ τῆς ἐν τοῖς διαλόγοις συνουσίας), *The Discourse with Bacchides and Cyrus in the Villa of Menarchus* (περὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ Μενάρχου διατριβῆς πρὸς Βακχίδην καὶ Κύρον). In the light of a close parallel from *Avoiding Distress* (ὡσπερ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ μοναρχικῇ διατριβῆς, 11, 76.12 PX), some scholars argue that ἐν αὐτῇ Μενάρχου in the above title should be emended to ἐν αὐτῇ μονάρχου, e.g. Kotzia and Sotirioudis (2016: 125). In that case we would be talking about private discussions on ethics taking place ‘at the imperial court’. As is clear, the emphasis in all these titles is on how a relationship or an interaction actually works or should, ideally, work. Galen’s *Kroniskoi* may also belong to this first group of writings on practical ethics. Although we know nothing about this work, it is most likely a literary description of erudite conversations that took place at banquets celebrating the Roman festival of Saturnalia (*pace* Nutton 2021: 123). The Saturnalia were held in honour of the god Saturn, the Roman equivalent of Greek Kronos, which helps explain why the work is given the Greek title *Kroniskoi*. In that sense, Galen’s *Kroniskoi* resembles Plutarch’s *Table Talk* or Athenaeus’s *The Sophists at Dinner*, which further validates Galen’s understanding of practical ethics as being deeply entrenched in social practice. The assumption of the generic affiliation of Galen’s *Kroniskoi* with the Imperial literary symposium chimes with the structure of the work itself, namely its sub-division into seven sections, in line with the division of Plutarch’s *Table Talk* and Athenaeus’s *The Sophists at Dinner*, each consisting of nine sections.

<sup>13</sup> *On Slander* (περὶ τῆς διαβολῆς), *Things Said in Public Against Flatterers* (περὶ τῶν δημοσῶν ῥηθέντων κατὰ κολάκων), *To What Extent the Esteem and Opinion of the Public is to be Taken into Account* (μέχρι πόσου τῆς παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς τιμῆς καὶ δόξης φρονιστέον ἐστίν). Love of riches (*philoploutia*), another standard passion in Imperial-period disquisitions on *moralia* (e.g.

moral uprightness, rooted in modesty and affability, widely<sup>14</sup> (even if not universally) considered defining features of cultured individuals (*pepaideumenoî*) throughout the Mediterranean world in this period.<sup>15</sup> All three strands attest to Galen's heightened alertness to practical philosophy and its social embedding, and help substantiate what is otherwise only evident from passing references in other parts of his corpus regarding the role of the ethical discipline, namely that it is beneficial in promoting purity, justice, friendship and happiness, as well as being open to anyone who shows an interest in it.<sup>16</sup>

In keeping with the spirit of the age, Galen seems deeply sensitised to the importance of practical philosophy both as a book topic and a way of life. Alongside his dedicated collection of moral treatises, which we have

Plutarch's *On Love of Money* or Aelius Aristides's *Oration of Rome*), is also explored by Galen: at the very end of his *Avoiding Distress*, he refers to a work he had produced entitled *On Rich People Infatuated with Money* (περὶ τῶν φιλοχρημάτων πλουσίων, 18, 92.6 PX), now lost.

<sup>14</sup> I say 'widely' because the essence of *paideia* for a *pepaideumenos* in this period was itself a contested question, especially in view of the tendency of professional sophists to lay greater stress on technical literary and oratorical accomplishment rather than on moral uprightness. Adrian of Tyre in Philostratus's *Lives of the Sophists* or Lexiphanes in Lucian's eponymous dialogue are representative examples of this.

<sup>15</sup> *Agreement* (περὶ ὁμονοίας), *Modesty* (περὶ αἰδοῦς), *Consolation* (περὶ παραμυθίας). The work *The Best Men Profit from Their Enemies* (of which only two fragments survive in Arabic; see Meyerhof 1929: 84, Lamoreaux 2016: 122, §131) is very much reminiscent of Plutarch's moral essay *On How to Benefit from your Enemies* and also fits the thematology of Galen's popular philosophical works. Here the emphasis is on Galen's disinterestedness and philanthropy: he does not charge his students or patients any money, nor does he yield to bribery. Rather, he ministers to the sick by supplying material goods (medicines, food) and services (nurses), and promotes the medical careers of other doctors.

The rest of the titles of Galen's ethical works bear out their inclination towards politics (*Public Pronouncements in the Presence of Pertinax*, <περὶ> τῶν ἐπὶ Περτινάκους δημοσίᾳ ῥηθέντων) and philosophical theory: *The Purpose of Life According to Philosophy* (περὶ τοῦ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν τέλους), *Pleasure and Pain* (περὶ ἡδονῆς καὶ πόνου), *The Consequences of Each Chosen Purpose in Life* (περὶ τῶν ἀκολουθῶν ἐκάστῳ τέλει βίων), *Against Favorinus's Attack on Socrates* (πρὸς τὸν Φαβωρίνον κατὰ Σωκράτους). The content of the works *To Make the Punishment Fit the Crime* (περὶ ἀμαρτημάτων καὶ κολάσεως ἰσότητος), *The Making of Wills* (περὶ διαθηκῶν ποιήσεως) and *On Idleness* (a title restored from the Arabic tradition, Boudon-Millot 2007: 170, n. 2) is less easy to define. The content of the work περὶ τῶν ἀναγιγνωσκόντων λάθρα has been much debated. Whether we take it to mean *People who Read in Secret*, *On Those who Plagiarise*, *On Those who Teach/Lecture Surreptitiously* (see Boudon-Millot 2007: 226–228) or even *Solitary Readers* (Nutton 2020: 77, with n. 15), λάθρα adds an ethical dimension to the activity of the verb's subject, which explains the inclusion of this text among Galen's moral writings. There are more ethically-inclined works under other book categories, e.g. *Whether Physiology is Useful for Moral Philosophy* (εἰ ἡ φυσιολογία χρήσιμος εἰς τὴν ἠθικὴν φιλοσοφίαν, *Lib. Prop.* 19, 172.17–173.1 Boudon-Millot = XIX.48.4–5 K.) or *The Happy, Blessed Life According to Epicurus* (περὶ τῆς κατ' Ἐπικούρου εὐδαιμόνου καὶ μακαρίου βίου, *Lib. Prop.* 19, 172.14–15 Boudon-Millot = XIX.48.1–2 K.). The latter is related to the work *On the Epicureans*, another title restored from the Arabic tradition and belonging to the works on moral philosophy (Boudon-Millot 2007: 170, n. 2).

<sup>16</sup> *Prop. Plac.* 14, 136.21–22 PX; *PHP* 9.7, 588.7–27 DL = V.779.16–781.8 K.

just surveyed, he also produced a good number of other texts that are steeped in moral(ising) influences and associations, despite the fact that they are not recorded among his ethical works in the autobibliographical lists. As a matter of fact, the heading and content of some of these works might at first sight point to their affiliation with other domains of Galen's oeuvre, e.g. prognostic theory (*Prognosis*, Chapter 8) or empiricism (*Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*, Chapter 5), but what unites them all is their ethical-psychotherapeutic value and the way they help reconstruct Galen's programme of emotional wellbeing.

And that is not all. Galen also imbued his technical tracts – both medical and philosophical – with moral reflections or overtones. The passages in question are sometimes concerned with representing Galen's high moral character (*ēthos*) as opposed to the villainy of his medical rivals. On other occasions, they delve into the gloomy ethical realities of present-day society or what Galen describes as the debased status of medicine compared to its morally flawless classical past. At other times, the teaching and learning of medicine itself is infused with moral lessons, and scientific accounts acquire a moral component often in the form of sermonising digressions or asides, which demonstrate the social importance of ethics in Galen's thought-world. Quotations from moral authorities or other material with a moral-didactic message reflecting popular morality are also utilised in non-ethical contexts, thus sharing widely held principles of the second/third-century Imperial state and foregrounding its solid ethical foundations.

In their totality, these scattered passages exploring ethics, together with the essays overtly designated as ethical and the individual works of a moral-psychotherapeutic nature form a relatively small proportion of Galen's overall production. But they still constitute an integral part of the author's mental mapping. The aim of this study is to piece them together, assess them for the first time in a holistic manner, and offer a new and robust framework in which we can comprehend Galen's role as a practical ethicist. This is an aspect of his intellectual profile that has been little studied and poorly understood up to now.<sup>17</sup> As I plan to show, the cornerstone of his contribution to this area that makes him influential, if not original, in

<sup>17</sup> The desideratum has been noted by some critics: e.g. Petit (2018: 134–135): 'Mais il manque une étude du Galien moraliste, spectateur impuissant et indigné des turpitudes de la société romaine.'; Lee (2014: 55): 'With few exceptions, little attention has been paid to Galen's own account of moral transformation . . .'; Linden (1999: 11, n. 5): 'It is unfortunate that Galen's contribution to ethics, not only with regard to medicine, but also to ethical methodology, has found so little attention among scholars . . .'. Others have vaunted the pervading presence of ethics in Galen's vast

ancient terms is his creative intermingling of medicine and practical ethics. Giving prominence to this dynamic interdisciplinarity in its social, philosophical and cultural context will transform our current understanding of Imperial-period literature on *moralia* as known from other thinkers. It will also give us new insights into popularised forms of ancient medical literature, refine our sense of ‘medical philosophy’ or ‘philosophical medicine’ through an emphasis on its ethical dimension that has previously been left out of relevant discussions, and provide a fresh vantage point from which to observe the social role of medicine. Last but not least, this more comprehensive reading of Galen’s moralising discourse will advance our understanding of the range of possibilities as regards representing key areas of the study of Imperial culture more generally, and notably athletics or the symposium.

### Contribution and methodology

Galen’s relationship with ethics is not a foregone conclusion or a straightforward matter. For, unlike key moralists such as Plutarch or Musonius Rufus, who were mainly philosophers who participated to some extent in political affairs, Galen’s primary occupation was that of a doctor and medical writer. True, he espoused a kind of medicine that was intimately bound up with philosophy and tended to accentuate his self-perception as a physician-cum-philosopher.<sup>18</sup> Yet technically he is the only medical expert we know of to have systematically engaged with ethics. Rufus of Ephesus (first century AD), the Anonymus of Paris (first century AD), Aretaeus of Cappadocia (second century AD) or Celsus (second century AD) discussed psychopathology and psychotherapy, but hardly touched on philosophical training or moral topics in general.<sup>19</sup> Other doctors who straddled the boundaries between medicine and philosophy, such as

corpus and its importance, e.g. Asmis (2014: 136–138), Hankinson (1993: 185), but have not gone into it in any detail.

<sup>18</sup> Galen himself tells us that the Roman emperor referred to him as ‘the first among doctors and unique among philosophers’, *Praen.* 11, 128.27–28 N. = XIV.660.11–12 K. Elsewhere he goes so far as to say that his teacher, the Peripatetic philosopher Eudemus, knew him for his philosophical standing and considered his practice of medicine a sideline, *Praen.* 2, 76.27–78.2 N. = XIV.608.13–18 K. On the model of the *medicus philosophus* that Galen embodies, see Romano (2000: 35–48). On Galen specifically, see Tieleman (2020).

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting that Caelius Aurelianus (fl. 400 AD, traditionally labelled a compiler of Soranus’s works) draws a clear distinction between mental disorders and moral passions (greed, fear, sadness, anger), demarcating them as subjects belonging to two different areas of study, e.g. Caelius Aurelianus, *Acut. Morb.* 3.13.109–111 (356.21–358.17 Bendz); see also Polito (2016). The rhetorical and emotive style of Aretaeus’s *On Acute and Chronic Diseases* led him to



Asclepiades of Bithynia (ca. 120 – 90 BC), Athenaeus of Attalia (fl. end of the first century BC), Sextus Empiricus (ca. 160 – ca. 210 AD) or Soranus of Ephesus (second century AD), might have been good candidates for surveying moral traits,<sup>20</sup> yet they too were not strongly attracted to them except for what they could contribute to pathology. For when moral traits feature in their nosological accounts, they are limited to their impact on the patient's corporeal health or behaviour.<sup>21</sup> The same emphasis on the primacy of the body over the soul features in Athenaeus and Soranus, who, as has recently been shown, were keen to explore the role of early education proper, habituation and intellectual study, but only in as far as they related to shaping a healthy body.<sup>22</sup> For the above-mentioned authors, then, matters of the soul are subordinate to somatic wellbeing, and are therefore a means to an end, that of the recovery of the body's strength and the alleviation of its sickness.

This attitude on the part of medical authors is taken to extremes in a contemporary declamation, which stages a dispute between a doctor, a philosopher and an orator regarding which of their disciplines is the more useful to the community.<sup>23</sup> The doctor makes a strong case for medicine, of course, reducing philosophy's role to moral philosophy in particular,<sup>24</sup> which he debunks. His main argument against it is that moral philosophy concerns few people (*ad paucos pertinent*), clearly having *theoretical* moral philosophy in mind, and that character is inborn (*mores nasci*), hence

circumstantially discuss social shame arising from physical disfigurement or (uncontrollable) behaviour as part of the symptomatology of the patient's disease. However, no practical ethical components are attached to such discussions other than those serving the author's rhetorical aims, e.g. *Acut. Morb.* 2.2.17-18 (21.16-26 Hude). Similarly, Rufus of Ephesus does not explore practical ethics, despite his cursory interest in the effect of a disease (e.g. melancholy) on someone's moral state. Cf. Swain (2008). Elsewhere, for example in his *Medical Questions*, the patient's character traits play a role in the diagnosis of the disease, e.g. *Quaest. Med.* 1, 24.8-12 Gärtner; 8, 38.21-22 Gärtner; 13, 46.15-17 Gärtner; cf. Letts (2016). And in other works, he refers in passing to vice and virtue in the context of his medical narratives, e.g. *Sat. et Gon.* 83.11-84.2 Daremberg-Ruelle.

<sup>20</sup> Nutton (2020: 91–92).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Celsus, *De Med.* 1.3.15-16 (34.19-25 M.), 1.5.2 (39.25-26 M.), 3.6.6-7 (111.32-112.7 M.), 3.18.18-24 (126.5-127.15 M.). The same goes for Soranus (despite the fact that he wrote a work entitled *On the Soul*, now lost): *Gyn.* 1.16 (46.95-96 Burguière, Gourevitch, and Malinas), 2.19 (31.80-96 Burguière, Gourevitch, and Malinas), 4.2 (4.59-65 Burguière, Gourevitch, and Malinas). At other times, moral qualities referred to in these authors are connected with professional conduct, e.g. Soranus, *Gyn.* 1.3 (6.1-8.45 Burguière, Gourevitch, and Malinas), Celsus, *De Med.* 7.pr.4 (301.24-302.5 M.); also in Aretaeus, *Chr. Morb.* 1.1.2 (36.11-13 Hude). Caelius Aurelianus, on whose theory of emotions see Horstmanshoff (1999), can also be added to this category.

<sup>22</sup> Coughlin (2018). <sup>23</sup> Pseudo-Quintilian, *The Lesser Declamations* 268.

<sup>24</sup> This is also supported by the fact that the doctor acknowledges the admirability of philosophy on the grounds that it promotes contentment with modest means (*modicis contenta est*) and the lack of desire for greater wealth (*ampliores opes non desiderat*). He must thus be referring to moral philosophy in particular.

moral philosophy is rendered useless, having failed to ‘cut out vice’ (*amputant vitia*). At the end of the declamation, the doctor exalts medicine’s utility by focusing only on the way it preserves the body’s wellness, in line with Athenaeus and Soranus above. Though a doctor himself, Galen not only did not subscribe to such notions, but also constructively opposed them through his pragmatic promotion of life-long moral development,<sup>25</sup> something that does not seem to have found an equal articulation in (near)contemporary medical discourse (more on this issue in [Chapter 2](#)).

Some scholars have briefly considered Galen’s medical ethics vis-à-vis Hippocratic deontology.<sup>26</sup> Others have dwelled on his indebtedness (or lack thereof) to earlier psychological and moral traditions by looking at relevant texts as sources of philosophical concepts and arguments. The burgeoning work on Galen’s philosophy of mind since the 1990s especially has provided us with a considerable body of theorisation on the ancient doctrines concerning the structure and function of the soul/mind and its relation to the body, mostly discussing the physical causation (humoral imbalance) and the pathologies of psychological disturbances. Examples include *melancholia*, *phrenitis*, *mania*, epilepsy, hallucinations and the like,<sup>27</sup> all nosological conditions which we would today place within the realm of psychiatry.<sup>28</sup> The focus in this book will be on moral passions and not mental malfunctions, which are not ‘diseases of the soul’ (νοσήματα τῆς ψυχῆς) in the way that Galen and others understood harmful passions to be,<sup>29</sup> albeit he sometimes mingled the two

<sup>25</sup> E.g. *De Mor.* 40 Kr.

<sup>26</sup> See Jouanna (1997), Linden (1999: 5–9) and Nutton (1972: 57–58); cf. Petit (2019: 51–55). There is still no comprehensive account of Galen’s medical deontology in its own right or its connection with practical philosophy. Research into the connection between medical ethics and practical philosophies in Graeco-Roman antiquity was noted as a desideratum by Kudlien (1970b) as early as 1970, but it has never been fully addressed since then. For Greek medical ethics Carrick (2001) is the most authoritative study.

<sup>27</sup> The major work in this area is Gill (1998), (2007), (2010: 243–329); also Hankinson (1991) and (1993), Tieleman (2003b), Donini (2008), Schiefsky (2012). See also the relevant chapters in the volume by Manuli and Vegetti (1988).

<sup>28</sup> Siegel (1973) considered them neurological conditions and categorised them into syndromes involving the nervous system and syndromes involving mental changes. See also Thumiger and Singer (2018: 1–24).

<sup>29</sup> In *Affected Places* Galen claims that the lesions of the rational or hegemonic/regent part of the soul provoke mental illnesses (e.g. phrenitis, lethargy, melancholic delirium), whereas the affections that strike the lower parts of the soul (i.e. the spirited and the desiderative/appetitive) cause moral aberrations, e.g. cowardice. Despite the fact that Galen occasionally argued for a natural aetiology for both mental illnesses and passions of the soul, he compartmentalised the two groups: ‘For clarity of exposition, let the functions of the rational mind (αἱ μὲν τοῦ λογιστικοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνέργειαι) be

groupings.<sup>30</sup> The same emphasis on theorising obtains in the more recent scholarship on ethics *per se*, which again privileges descriptive models and typologies (for example, in relation to emotions or proposed psychotherapeutic practices),<sup>31</sup> glossing over Galen's moral agenda and its pragmatic impact on various spheres of the life of the contemporary upper classes as depicted in his works.<sup>32</sup>

While taking into account the conceptual underpinnings of Galen's practical ethics, this study seeks to investigate the sophisticated ways – literary, rhetorical, argumentative or other – in which this doctrinal material is deployed by Galen so as to make his moralising more accessible to the reader. To put it another way, when it comes to Galen's voicing of moral ideas it is not the 'what' but the 'how' that interests me. This study highlights the fact that Galen's ethical instruction is tailored to suit various contexts, genres and target audiences, and it foregrounds in particular the social dynamics of his didacticism, which is aimed at enhancing his

called "directive" (ἡγεμονικὰ), and those of non-rational minds (αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀλόγων) "moral" (ἠθικὰ); about the latter I do not intend to speak, or about the affections of the liver or the heart.' (*Loc. Aff.* 3.6, VIII.163.2-5 K.). Just like Galen, Plutarch too in *On Superstition* 165C refers to *pathē* specifically as illnesses (*nosēmata*) of the soul (also in *De Garr.* 502E, 504E-F, *De Cobib. Ira* 457B-C, *De Curios.* 515C-D, *De Inv. et Od.* 536E). On Galen's passions as *nosēmata psychēs*, see Gill (1985: 317), Devinant (2018: 201–204) and Singer (2021: 156, with n. 3), who uses the term 'medical psychic impairments' to better distinguish them from emotions. Note Maximus of Tyre's oration entitled *Which Diseases (nosēmata) are Harsher, Those of the Body or Those of the Soul?* (*Oration* 7, ed. Trapp 1994) and Plutarch's (incomplete) essay *Whether the Passions (pathē) of the Soul are Worse than Those of the Body* (*Mor.* 500B–502A), with both works exploring moral passions such as anger, grief, pleasure, hatred, envy etc. (rather than mental dysfunctions) as sicknesses of the soul.

The well-known analogy between body and soul and thus medical and philosophical therapy, which is pervasive in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, also theorises passions as diseases of the soul: 'Philosophy heals human diseases, diseases produced by false beliefs. Its arguments are to the soul as the doctor's remedies are to the body. They can heal, and they are to be evaluated in terms of their power to heal. As the medical art makes progress on behalf of the suffering body, so philosophy for the soul in distress'. Nussbaum (1994: 14). See also Edelstein (1967: 362–366), Pigeaud (1981), García Ballester (1988), Luchner (2004: 99–170) and succinctly Gill (2013: 343–348). Edelstein's (1967: 350) view is also worth quoting: 'The true contribution of medicine to philosophy, I venture to suggest, lies in the fact that philosophers found in medical treatment and in the physician's task a simile of their own endeavor. The healing of diseases, as well as the preservation of health, provided an analogy which served to emphasize the validity of certain significant ethical concepts and thus helped to establish the truth of philosophy; therein consisted the most fruitful relationship between ancient medicine and ancient philosophy'.

<sup>30</sup> Harris (2013: 9); cf. van der Eijk (2013). One such example of mingling is, for instance, when Galen refers, as he often does, to the emotional manifestations of specific clinical conditions, e.g. fear and despondency (*phobos* and *dysthymia*), accompanying the melancholic condition.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Becchi (2012), Singer (2013: 4–41), Kaufman (2017), Singer (2018), Singer (2019b), Lee (2020: 49–102). See also the beginning of Chapter 6.

<sup>32</sup> The first few paragraphs of Chapters 4–8 explain in more detail how this book advances previous research and plugs gaps in scholarly literature for each text under examination.

audience's morals not in any abstract or absolute terms, but bearing in mind the special conditions of the community they live in, against a backdrop of situational variability. Galen's moral tracts and passages are examined in their own right and for their own interpretative, communicative or performative merits, not as repositories of philosophical tenets, but as lively textual entities, which convey moral concepts to an informed audience and actively reform their moral positions, while elucidating and debating their contemporary social and cultural ambience, in line with a new-historicist perspective.<sup>33</sup> For instance, the claims of the elite to social mobility and promotion, the power struggles they were often caught up in and the expectation that they should be highly educated and morally upright (*kaloï kagathoi*) are some of the factors that Galen as ethicist had to address, if he wanted to come across as practical and useful to the consumers of his moral advice.

Our knowledge of the moral climate of the Graeco-Roman period in the light of Greek testimonies has significantly improved thanks to recent work on Plutarch's practical ethics (van Hoof 2010, Xenophon 2016a), Epictetus's pedagogical approach (Long 2002), and Imperial-period popular (not high) morality (Morgan 2007). So the present book seeks to add to this trend by illuminating a hitherto unappreciated and idiosyncratic exponent of philosophical writing on how to lead the good life in this era. Thus the core question that this book addresses is: What is Galen's contribution to the popularisation of moral philosophy in relation to and beyond his proficiency in medicine? Other key questions tackled are: How does Galen adjust his moral guidelines to fit the needs and requirements of contemporary life at the top? What techniques does he employ in assigning himself moral authority on different occasions? And, at the end of the day, to what extent could the exercise of reading Galen's works on medicine and practical ethics in tandem rather than in isolation reshape our image of Galen and his times?

This study ultimately aims to amend the scholarly view that sees Galen's ethical writing as an opportunistic by-product, intended for professional self-advertisement amidst the agonistic structures of the Imperial world.<sup>34</sup> It is true that medicine was at the time a notoriously contentious

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Schmitz (2007: 172–175) with further reading.

<sup>34</sup> This view refers to Galen's attachment to philosophy in general, though as the scholarly citations below show, ethics in particular is also involved: Nutton (1985: 28–29): 'Galen's own justification of medicine is a desperate attempt to raise it to the level and status of philosophy, an art fully worthy of the truly free man. His convoluted argument links a doctor's detailed knowledge of the internal organs of the body with the possession of all the moral virtues, and turns the doctor into a super-

occupation. In the absence of any formal educational qualifications, as we understand them today, or any socially sanctioned regulation of their profession, medical practitioners in antiquity often needed to boast of their individual skills and erudition to cement their authority, discomfit their rivals and win the trust of patients, powerful friends or patrons. The competition for distinction took place not just in bedside group-consultations or the anatomical demonstrations that proved popular urban spectacles, but also in public lectures and disputations as well as in the area of authorship of medical works. The epigraphic record shows that elite doctors also competed with one another in ritualised medical contests, such as the Great Asclepieia in Ephesus, taking place in front of large crowds of onlookers. That said, such unhelpfully broad generalisations regarding the combative nature of medicine cannot be applied heedlessly to the interpretation of Galen's ethical work. They need to be nuanced and evaluated against the astonishing diversity of moral capital that permeates the Galenic corpus, unmatched in the work of any other ancient physician. The energy, passion and time he spent on the creation and dissemination of such a quantity of moral material shows that for Galen ethics was not just a passport to social and professional advancement, but rather translated into a conceptual apparatus for delivering the lessons he wished to give in the morals of his day. That is not to say that self-promotion is wholly excluded from this process. Self-promotion is involved in as far as Galen needs to impose the required authority to hold forth about how things are morally and to construct a moral world for himself and his audience while surpassing other ethically inadequate doctors and superficially speculative philosophers.

By the same token, the tendency to explain Galen's moral project in the light of his dependence on the rhetorical and sophistic elements of Imperial culture also needs to be revisited. As a moralist, Galen would

saint'. Galen belongs to a group of writers, Nutton goes on, who 'are all using the same language and arguments in an attempt to suggest that their own individual speciality is somehow on a higher social and intellectual plane. They endeavour to replace mundane reality by a high ideal.' See also Nutton (1972: 57–58). Cf. Pleket (1995: 33): 'That a thorough philosophical training may well have enabled the physician to communicate with his patients better and perhaps even to cure them more successfully (or at least to make them believe it) is true enough. But I do feel that it was also and above all a mechanism for acquiring social respectability in a society in which rhetors, sophists and rhetorically educated elite-members increasingly dominated urban politics. The more philosopher, the less dirty hands and the more prestige.' See also Grant (2000: 9): 'Galen's emphasis on philosophy as a key to becoming a good doctor may be his attempt to link the honoured with the maligned disciplines. It certainly gave him the prestige to mingle with the upper echelons of society, if not as an equal, then certainly as someone to be admired.'; cf. Mattern (2008a: 9), Mattern (2013: 113–114).

have naturally used his convincing rhetoric to put across his ethical message as efficiently and broadly as possible (what I call ‘moralising rhetoric’). Consequently this book approaches the rhetorical and persuasive functions of ethics from a different angle from that embraced by most recent literature, i.e. not as engendering vain self-glorification in medicine, but as a socially beneficial exercise in self-advertisement, a powerful resource that helped Galen establish himself as an active and efficient moral philosopher, entrenched in the society in which he lived and operated. In that sense, this book offers a novel assessment of Galen’s public role by approaching him as a teacher of ethics, whose instruction sought to have a positive influence on the daily lives of different members of society, with a wide range of pursuits and ambitions, both private and public. Galen’s broad ethical agenda suggests that he was not just keen to treat bodies but souls as well; to (re)form character, modify moral mistakes, console, caution, provoke, problematise and even reprimand, as necessary, for what he believed to be a shared morality in his contemporary world.

In pursuing this agenda, I shall be exploiting a deliberately wide range of hermeneutic tools, such as literary analysis (including issues of genre, structure and organisation, and narrative texture, e.g. shift of grammatical subject, style, intertextual echoes, and linguistic predilection), and an extensive set of rhetorical and other discursive tactics that enable our author to promote ethics, bolster his self-characterisation or underpin his rapport with his in-text addressee(s) and by extension wider audience. The close-reading analysis is informed by modern methodological approaches to the understanding and explication of ancient texts, such as emotion theory, narratology, Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of class fraction, Michel Foucault’s observations on morality and frankness of speech, and the sociological theory by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann that helps construe the operation of certain vices in the medical encounter. Theoretical models from the modern anthropology of ethics also offer some support to the interpretation of Galen’s modes of moralism in [Chapter 1](#), whereas positioning theory is used in the Conclusion to offer a lens through which to focus on the different types of role-playing in Galen’s moral relations to his medical and philosophical colleagues, as described in different parts of his work.

### Overview of Chapters

This book consists of two Parts. By surveying the breadth and subtlety of Galen’s moralising interventions in mainly non-ethical works, [Chapters](#)

1–3 (comprising Part I) seek to provide a systematic account of the main moral themes and types of moralism in Galen. Among these, the most general level is represented by an unparticularised moralism, in which the author pronounces ethical verdicts with universal application. Galen's aim here is not to override moral relativism (in the modern sense of the term) nor restrain moral freedom. Rather, he seeks to delimit what he wishes to stigmatise as deviant behaviour as lucidly as possible, so as to be able to offer rudimentary directives for goodness effectively. In this model of basic moralism, even though there are instances where the author's moral viewpoint features in a commanding fashion, reference is made to an astute reader who either embraces, upon reflection, Galen's viewpoint or judiciously considers what is at stake when the former goes astray.

That is particularly true also of the test cases from technical works, especially those dealing with physiological psychology, which are discussed in Chapter 2. These show that Galen's resourceful combination of popular philosophy and medicine is intended to promote mental alertness in his readers in various aspects of their personal and social lives, such as the symposium or the area of maintaining good health (hygiene). The control of emotions and the social embeddedness of ethics that Galen emphasises in these passages while at the same time describing the physical basis of character formation, make him stand out from other medical authors inasmuch as they reveal his proposed vision of a moral form of medicine, which is the subject of Chapter 3.

This Chapter explains in detail how Galen endows medical science with moral probity. In broad outline, he extrapolates moral principles from his ethical programme to feed into his medical accounts and thus reveal his personal responses to what he represents as the immorality of other doctors. Assigning praise and blame or stressing social shame and fear are central moral-didactic devices here, as is reproach with a view to moral amendment or Galen's attempts at self-deprecation in order to affect his readers' moral activity. The findings of Chapters 1–3 are thus designed to offer a solid interpretative basis for better understanding the features of Galen's moralising in individual texts with an ethical provenance (*Avoiding Distress, Affections and Errors of the Soul*) or an ethical character (*Exhortation to the Study of Medicine, Recognising the Best Physician, Prognosis*) that are the focus of the ensuing five Chapters of this book (Part II).

Chapter 4 examines Galen's credentials as an ethical philosopher in the light of his recently discovered essay *Avoiding Distress*. It argues that his moral agenda which is expanded upon here makes him an active participant in the practical ethics of the High Roman Empire, with a more

profound attentiveness to popular philosophy than is usually admitted. Galen's dialogue with what has been termed 'Stoic psychotherapy' and the Platonic-Aristotelian educational model helps build up his ethical influence through an engagement with the past. On the other hand, his individual characteristics, such as the autobiographical perspective of his narrative and the intimacy established between author and addressee, render *Avoiding Distress* exceptional among essays (whether Greek or Latin) treating anxiety, especially when compared with the tracts on mental tranquillity written by Seneca and Plutarch. Another distinctive element of the treatise is that Galen's self-projection as a therapist of the emotions corresponds to his role as a practising physician as regards the construction of authority and the importance of personal experience. Finally, the diligence with which Galen reformulates similar pieces of moral advice in his *Affections and Errors of the Soul* – a work that is different in form and intent from *Avoiding Distress* – bears witness to the flexibility of his practical ethics and the resourcefulness and adaptability with which he presents it.

Chapter 5 turns the spotlight on the rather overlooked treatise *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*. It argues that in this work Galen constructs or conjures up images of young readers, intending it to act as an educational manual in moral intensification for prospective medical students. Therefore, this Chapter demonstrates how Galen's concern for his reader's acculturation might explain the appropriation of advice and the selection of relevant material from a long-established protreptic tradition. In discussing Galen's moralising methods and the pedagogical elements of the essay, this Chapter also draws links between Galenic and Plutarchan moralism, dealt with in detail for the first time, and thereby arguing that Galen's moral writings need to be construed in the light of Imperial-period practical ethics. That proposition receives further support from the special features of Galen's protreptic discourse discussed in this Chapter, especially practicability and effectiveness resulting from the author's philosophical leanings (e.g. his Platonic-Aristotelian background) and medical expertise (the mechanics of the body and his emulation of Hippocrates in the second part of the essay).

Chapter 6 centres on Galen's longest moral work, the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, and explores the features of Galenic practical philosophy from a number of angles. The first section of the Chapter provides an analysis of the work's programmatic preface and shows that Galen exploits the dynamics of polemic, self-promotion and self-effacement to cast himself as a prominent contributor in this intellectual area. The next section



discusses Galen's emphasis on self-knowledge, which is often blocked by self-love. It claims that in order to generate feelings of revulsion with regard to the latter, Galen works on 'class fraction' as a tactic with moralising intent. Another strand of special importance in the essay is the figure of the moral adviser, which Galen elaborates on so as to highlight the need for welcoming and indeed enduring moral criticism. Even though the moral adviser features in other authors of the Second Sophistic (the renaissance of Greek letters from roughly the first to the third century AD), in Galen it points to the applicability of ethics to a broad range of social contexts, thus, I would argue, credentialling his situational ethics.

A separate section of [Chapter 6](#) focuses on the concept of free speech (*parrhēsia*). While Galen debates the challenges of social and political interaction, he advises frankness at all costs. A genuine friend should never be reluctant to express the truth of someone's moral situation and this makes him strikingly different from the flatterer, a disgusting stock figure in Imperial works on *moralia*, particularly in Plutarch, whom Galen seems to follow here. Another shrewd device that Galen uses to good effect to achieve the moral rectification of readers is the presentation of images involving the body and soul. These instigate the aesthetic evaluation of negative emotions. To that end, the description of the pathology of anger (its origins and results) brings out the destructive impact of this passion, particularly in the episode featuring Galen's Cretan friend, which is framed, I suggest, as an 'ethical case history', sharing characteristics with Galen's clinical accounts of patients that are aimed at showing how to treat the body (medical case histories). The practical tone of Galen's ethics is also evinced in his account of insatiability and his overall tactics of not simply proposing courses of action but most importantly inciting critical responses from his readers as to how best to handle certain emotional conditions, given that the ascetic lifestyle is not an option for Galen. Social and political realities always impinged on a person's moral stance in the Graeco-Roman era and so Galen also taps into the idea of social shame/honour to shape a personal sense of restraint.

[Chapter 7](#) sets *Recognising the Best Physician* at the heart of its discussion, moving the focus from popular philosophical works to tracts of social commentary that are rich in ethical references or subtexts. I suggest that, despite its content being closely related to the material discussed in *The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher*, the latter contains a more generalised advocacy of how the proper doctor ought to behave, whereas *Recognising the Best Physician* restricts its focus to treating Galen's individual virtues, and

renders self-projection more central to the narrative. This enables Galen to provide a more pragmatic account of the connection he envisaged between medicine, ethics and society, and place the morally didactic function of medicine in particular at the forefront of his intellectual horizons.

I highlight how *Recognising the Best Physician* offers a plethora of passages discussing moral issues, for example the emphasis on the value of truth over deception, the issue of flattery and the ethical corruption of contemporary society. I show that to better illuminate the immorality of his medical colleagues, Galen, inspired by philosophical intertexts, notably the *Republic* and the *Gorgias*, creatively likens them to wicked and dissimulating orators. By also attributing features of self-interested politicians familiar from Platonic metaphors to contemporary charlatan physicians, Galen recategorises his rivals' abilities and undermines their moral standing to suggest that the ideal kind of medicine to combat public disorder is the moral medicine embodied by himself. To that end, Galen sketches himself as a Platonic helmsman, entrusted with a humanistic vocation and safeguarding social and political stability. In Galen's enlightened understanding of medicine, I argue, the medical art is an approved form of politics, well adapted to respond to the chaos tormenting his society under the Empire. Hence, authorial self-praise is not always (or necessarily) linked to rhetorical self-affirmation, but rather, at least in Galen's case, fosters a potent vision of an edifying type of medicine, which it is hoped will provide practical remedies for the corruption of contemporary Rome. This squares with Galen's practical ethics as proposed in other Chapters of this book.

The [final Chapter \(Chapter 8\)](#) shows how close Galen is to the style and language of a practical moralist by focusing on the previously neglected moral aspects of *Prognosis*. The rich ethical material that Galen includes on the way his society functions and the role of physicians is construed as moral reportage, which also enables him to provide the image he constructs of himself as a medic with profoundly moral features. The essay's preface stresses the quest for truth and the exercise of correct judgment as moral principles advocated by Galen for physicians and all other professionals as thinking beings. This, I suggest, has a strong theoretical background expounded upon in Galen's ethical work, pointing to his ideological coherence on ethics and its uniform application across texts of a (seemingly) different purpose. The preface is also informed by Galen's perception of the morality of doctors addressed in the *Therapeutic Method*, which I see as a sibling account of Galen's conceptualisation of medicine as a virtuous art. Furthermore, the delineation of moral character is made

central to Galen's notion of the proper physician, which explains the fact that he formulates his text in such a way as to distinguish himself and his peers from charlatans and sophists, a group of moral outsiders traditionally depicted as quarrelsome and vainglorious. This Chapter also discusses the sophisticated discourse on malice and contentiousness that Galen sets up within the context of some of his medical case histories.

The analysis of the writing technique and structure of the case histories as much as of the characters involved offers unique insights into Galen's account of emotions, especially their causes, consequences, theorisation and phenomenology. In *Prognosis* Galen is not just the narrator of the account but also a protagonist in the plot. In the highly aggressive confrontations described in this text, Galen outranks all others, especially figures with no obvious links to philosophy, such as the physician Antigenes. However, in the face of philosophical luminaries, such as the Peripatetic philosopher Eudemus, Galen retreats: he accepts moral advice and aspires to emulate Eudemus as an ethical exemplar. These well-integrated tales stage moral controversies through multiple role playing and thus bring out the power dynamics of philosophy in social intercourse. The dialogues between the characters embody moral lessons of considerable importance, and the reactions of the characters themselves help make several ethical points, albeit with different degrees of explicitness. This Chapter concludes by stressing how in these instances Galen's medical activity impinged on the formation and sometimes the development of his moral ideas. In *Prognosis* ethics emerges as a robust area of thought, study and professional performance in Galen.

At the end of this study, I provide a substantial summary of the scope, techniques and features of Galen's ethical discourse and its close interplay with his medicine to illuminate in conclusive mode that Galen's moralism is idiosyncratic, wide-ranging and broadly systematic with a notable degree of conceptual consistency. Through the key results of my research into the wide spectrum of Galenic moral and moralising works and passages, I hope to have shown that the concepts of freedom from detrimental passions, ethically charged responses to social and professional trials, prudent adjustment and self-sufficiency are only some of the staples in his moral representation of thinking beings in the Imperial world, attesting to the fact that Galen's ethics is morally sited. By the end of this book, I also hope to have penetrated below the surface appearance of Galen the physician and medical writer and consolidated his image as a distinctive ethical author and practical moralist of the High Roman Empire.



PART I

*Moral Themes and Types of  
Moralism in Galen*



## *General Protreptic and Suggested Approaches to Life*

As noted in the Introduction, Galen's commitment to ethical welfare and the pursuit of virtue is illustrated not only in works that have a transparently moral character, but also across a range of passages in non-practical ethical contexts. With mostly those in mind, this study begins with a critical analysis of the moral topics that concern Galen and the various strategies he employs to foster different types of moralising. The aim is to highlight the central features of his moral didacticism about the right and wrong way to live and the right and wrong way to be in oneself, which we will see in both subtler and more elaborated forms in the ensuing Chapters that focus on individual case studies.

Guiding people towards specific moral paths through encouragement is an overarching category in Galen's practical ethics. The passage below from the Arabic epitome of *Character Traits* helps elucidate the key components of such moral coaching:

Someone who in his nature and his act makes [the attainment of] this pleasure [i.e. for eating] his goal is like a pig, whereas someone whose nature and act loves the beautiful follows the example of the angels. These [last], therefore, deserve to be called 'godlike', and those who pursue pleasures deserve to be called 'beasts'. The things that are desirable are the good and the beautiful, and those that should be avoided are the evil and the ugly. When an action is good and beautiful all people must choose [to perform] it, and when it is bad and ugly they [must] all abhor it. This is generally acknowledged. *De Mor.* 34 Kr.; transl. Davies in Singer (2013)

The distinction between pigs and angels (the Arabic substitution for Galen's non-monotheistic 'god') impinges on the reader's ethical decision-making, in so far as it juxtaposes two groups of moral agents.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The initial analysis of the work is by Walzer (1949). See also Maróth (1993) and Kaufman (2017). The divide between pigs and angels, and pleasure and the beautiful in the quoted passage has philosophical origins. It makes use of the distinction between the ethical ideals of the Socratic

The first opts for a life of sensation and bestiality specific to animals, in stark contrast to the second one that embraces a life of nobility and excellence. This virtuous type of life is described in attractive terms to Galen's audience. For it is presented as approximating the level of the divine, a notion encapsulated in the Platonic ideal of assimilation to god, which is invested with social esteem further on in the work, in a statement that teases out what might already be implicit in the foregoing extract: '[T]here is no honour greater than that of imitating god, so far as is possible for a human being. This is achieved by despising worldly pleasures and preferring the beautiful' (*De Mor.* 41 Kr.).<sup>2</sup> The thematic selection and bipolar organisation of the ethical material, together with the exhortative way in which it is communicated, make it action-directing,<sup>3</sup> i.e. prompting the reader towards the performance of good deeds. At its heart lie the concepts of exemplarity and imitation together with an appeal to the readers' concern for their reputations, lest they yield to brutish wickedness instead.

Besides being succinct, direct and clear-cut, Galen's moral message in this passage is also impersonal, since it conveys general truisms on morality without involving a specific addressee or, for that matter, the author's moral voice. Individualisation is ruled out for the sake of a universal conceptual framework in which 'all people' must act in a certain way without exceptions allowed. No other, more complex, rhetorical technique to navigate one's course of action in specific domains or real-life situations is on offer. That is the reader's job, namely to customise the collective injunctions to their own moral life. On that premise, Galen's moralism here synthesises two types of ethical instruction, viz. 'protreptic' (or

tradition (Platonic, Peripatetic, Stoic), which were founded on the cultivation of moral excellence through the exercise of reason and the acquisition of knowledge, and the hedonistic values represented by the Epicurean or Cyrenaic tradition, which were founded on the pursuit of 'pleasure' (however that term was defined in antiquity). Key sources discussing this issue include Cicero's *On Ends* or Maximus of Tyre's *Orations* 29–33 entitled *The True End of Life: Virtue or Pleasure?*

<sup>2</sup> On this Platonic ideal and how it effects moral transformation, see Lee (2020: 103–118), who discusses two competing definitions of assimilation to god: contemplative (world-escaping) and moral (world-engaging). On assimilation to god according to Galen, see e.g. Lee (2020: 148–154).

<sup>3</sup> Hau (2016: 8) distinguishes between moral-didactic strategies that can be 'action-directing, that is, aiming to influence a reader's actions or behaviour' and 'thought-directing, that is, aiming to influence the way a reader thinks about the world and the way of behaving in it'. However, the boundaries between these two groups can be murky, since one's thinking on ethical issues can have a direct influence upon one's behaviour and vice versa. In the main text, I have adopted the term 'action-directing' in its narrowest sense, as primarily affecting one's moral performance, in line with the emphasis of the Galenic passage discussed. See also: 'It is up to you whether you honour your soul by making it like the angels or disdain it by making it like the beast', *De Mor.* 40 Kr.



‘expository’) and ‘descriptive’ (or ‘exploratory’) moralism, the former suggesting what one ought to do and what to eschew (in this instance, to act virtuously, not wickedly), while the latter probes moral rules about human experience, inviting recipients to make up their own minds about how best to employ them in their lives.<sup>4</sup> In a way, Galen’s allowance for the open-ended, exploratory possibilities of virtuous activity is compatible with the conceit of self-governance as an inherent element of ancient ethics, according to Julia Annas: ‘Ancient ethical theories do not assume that morality is essentially demanding . . . ; rather, the moral point of view is seen as one that the agent will naturally come to accept in the course of a normal unrepressed development’.<sup>5</sup> Scrutiny of broad-brush advice with a view to its pragmatic use in individual circumstances might be one example of such unrepressed development, a Foucauldian ‘technology of the self’ leading to moral cultivation.<sup>6</sup> As we will see in various parts of this book, even though the moral learners’ autonomy is effectively preserved in Galen, in the sense that they are assumed to practise critical reflection and given moral options, there are sometimes limits to that autonomy, dictated mainly by the addressee’s or reader’s level of philosophical attainment, as well as the author’s didactic goals and self-referential claims in each case (e.g. Chapters 5 and 6).

Unparticularised moralism (which is expository and to some extent exploratory as seen above) appears in medical contexts as well, as for example when Galen stresses the negative repercussions of extreme affectivity on the body: ‘Obviously one must refrain from excess of all affections of the soul: anger, grief, joy, <outburst>, fear, envy; for these will change the natural composition of the body’ (*Ars Med.* 24, 351.2-6 Boudon-Millot = I.371.10-14 K.).<sup>7</sup> How exactly this occurs is not explained here,

<sup>4</sup> These are the two most important categories of Plutarch’s moralism as analysed by Pelling (1995) and others. Duff (1999: 69) presents exploratory moralism thus: ‘even though it does not contain imperatives, it provides food for reflection, a reflection which may, ultimately, affect the audience’s behaviour’. Pelling and Duff consider Thucydides’s *History* and Sophocles’s *Antigone* respectively as embodiments of that kind of moralism. Cf. Morgan’s ‘executive ethics’ (2007: 180–181), which seems closer to exploratory moralism, being adaptable and telling people how to behave, not what to do.

<sup>5</sup> Annas (1993: 4). Cf. also Holmes (2014), who refers to the ‘open-endedness’ of human life in Galen and the agent’s control over their lives.

<sup>6</sup> Foucault (1988: 18): ‘[T]echnologies of the self . . . permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.’

<sup>7</sup> ἀπέχεσθαι δὲ δηλονότι τῆς ἀμετρίας αὐτοῦς χρῆ ἀπάντων τῶν ψυχικῶν παθῶν, ὀργῆς καὶ λύπης <et *gaudium*> καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ φόβου καὶ φθόνου· ἐξίστησι γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα, καὶ ἄλλοιοῖ τὸ σῶμα τῆς κατὰ φύσιν συστάσεως.

with Galen's moral advice propounded as a basic directive for moderation, which it is up to the readers to make sense of in the light of their particular situation.

This moralising technique accords very well with the function of morally-loaded quotations in non-ethical settings. These are used by Galen to substantiate accepted truth regarding human nature and at the same time refine his readers' abstractive skills, leading them to reflect if there is anything in what Galen says that could resonate with their own ethical state. A case in point is the beginning of the third Book of *The Different Kinds of Pulse* (*Diff. Puls.* 3, VIII.636.1-8 K.). Here Galen deals with the role of varied denotation in provoking unnecessary ambiguity and hence disagreement among people, especially in the realm of science. This topic arises from his more general distaste for linguistic pedantry, which Galen tends to put in a moral context, as, for instance, when he compares it with failure in one's way of life (*bios*).<sup>8</sup> In this way, Galen seems to situate himself in the contemporary debate about the primacy of ethics over linguistic or logical subtleties, something which had troubled other philosophers such as Seneca or Epictetus.<sup>9</sup> In order to obliterate fastidiousness, then, he inserts a Euripidean quotation which associates this vice with despicable dispute (*eris*) over different ideas of goodness and wisdom.<sup>10</sup> We will see in a subsequent Chapter that *eris* is a staple in Galen's moral outlook, which he accuses his rivals of in order to reinforce their negative characterisation and trounce them. On a first level, therefore the tragic quotation incites revulsion against contentiousness. On another level, Galen makes further use of the concept of the different meanings of goodness and wisdom in Euripides by adding truth (his favourite) as a third virtue in need of unanimous comprehension. This he does in order to emphasise the necessity of a shared mentality as to the notional burden of ethical principles affecting science as much as life. With these two moves, Galen makes the moral substance of the quotation an organic

<sup>8</sup> 'I consider it unworthy to blame or censure those who commit solecisms. For solecism and barbarism of life are much worse than those of mere language' (ἀπαξιδῶ μηδενὶ μέμφεσθαι τῶν σολοικιζόντων τῇ φωνῇ μηδ' ἐπιτιμᾶν. "Ἀμεινον γὰρ ἔστι τῇ φωνῇ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ βίῳ σολοικίζειν τε καὶ βαρβαρίζειν), *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 5.2-3, 101.10-12 Boudon-Millot = XIX.60.18-3. K.; transl. Singer (1997).

<sup>9</sup> Trapp (2007: 7) citing, *inter alios*, Seneca and the pertinent passage from *Letter* 45.5: 'We weave knots and with our words first bind up, then resolve ambiguities. Have we really so much spare time? Do we really know how to live, and how to die?' (transl. Trapp).

<sup>10</sup> 'If all were at one in their ideas of honour and wisdom, | there would be no strife to make men disagree' (Εἰ πᾶσι ταῦτόν καλὸν ἔφυ σοφόν θ' ἅμα, | Οὐκ ἦν ἄν ἀμφίλεκτος ἀνθρώποις ἔρις), *Phoenician Women* 499-500. On Galen's method of citation and its various functions, see Boudon-Millot (2015b).

element of his prefatory section that warns against strife and in favour of genuineness, precision and clarity.

In other parts of the same work, Galen attacks the doctor Archigenes precisely for not explicating the true meaning of the heavy pulse, and so wrong-foots him on moral grounds, for prattling (λαλεῖν) and not actually talking (λέγειν), using a comic quotation from Eupolis: ‘Excellent in prattling, but in speaking most incapable’ (λαλεῖν ἄριστος, ἀδυνατώτατος λέγειν).<sup>11</sup> With its oppositional structure between virtue and vice, excellence and incapability put in general terms, this ethically-oriented quotation too takes on wider relevance, becoming applicable not only to a particular individual, in this case Archigenes, but to every single one of Galen’s readers, who are thus counselled against garrulity (ἀδολεσχία), another common evil that Galen disdains throughout his writings. I shall return to this in [Chapter 3](#).

The moralising effect of the above and other similar quotations is made possible thanks to Galen’s – and, we assume, also his audience’s – belief that moral virtue is a defining feature of humanity. That explains his tendency to encourage admirable instantiations of excellence, e.g. love of truth (φιλαλήθεια), love of labour (φιλοπονία), love of honour (φιλοτιμία), and to attempt to dissuade the reader from wicked ones, most notably envy (φθόνος), love of strife (φιλονεικία), love of reputation (φιλοδοξία), shamelessness (ἀναισχυντία), false modesty (δυσωπία) or meddlesomeness (πολυπραγμοσύνη). In all these cases readers are obliquely urged to respond to their human stature, they are being alerted to and incentivised to adopt what is commonly advocated as human morality: e.g. ‘this is something that is a property of all of us: to embrace, accept and love the good, and to reject, hate and avoid the bad’ (ὑπάρχει τοῦτο πᾶσιν ἡμῖν, ἀσπάζεσθαι μὲν τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ προσίεσθαι καὶ φιλεῖν, ἀποστρέφεσθαι δὲ καὶ μισεῖν καὶ φεύγειν τὸ κακόν, *QAM* 11, 78.8–10 Ba. = IV.815.2–4 K.). In other texts, Galen insists that we are called humans for displaying the positive aspects of our nature, rather than moral infraction such as fierceness, savageness, idiocy and mischief (*Di. Dec.* 1.9, IX. 815.3–6 K.). And as already noted, a sense of shame is usually invoked when agents allow their rational and humane manners to be superseded by vulgarity and viciousness, e.g. *Art. Sang.* 7.3, 174.6–9 Furley and Wilkie = IV.729.8–11 K. Even though this passage refers specifically to a group of Erasistratean

<sup>11</sup> Eupolis, *Demes* fragm. 116, *PCG* vol. 5, p. 363, which survives only in Plutarch’s *Alcibiades* 13.2, perhaps Galen’s source. See Kotzia-Panteli (1995: 100–104) specifically on Galen’s attack on Archigenes regarding his erroneous use of medical terminology.

doctors, the importance of ‘waking up’ to the shameful of something about oneself that one had previously not been properly aware of is verbalised in non-specific terms, by means of the comparison with waking up from a deep sleep (αἰδισθέντες . . . ὥσπερ ἐξ ὑπνου βαθέος ἐγερθέντες), an experience no doubt familiar to all members of Galen’s audience.<sup>12</sup>

Attitudes to sleep as well as to food and drink (of which more anon) are in fact hotbeds for lessons of morality in Galen. The work *Thrasymbulus* dramatises an imputation against athletes that they are given to excessive sleeping, eating and drinking. A relevant passage reads as follows:

These are people who yesterday or the day before were indulging in unnatural stuffing of their bodies and sleep; yet they are so incredibly arrogant as to hold forth, shamelessly and at length, on subjects in which even persons of considerable education may have difficulty in immediately making a correct assessment of the logical conflict or consequence of the propositions. What would such people learn, even if they heard some proposition of great profundity, wisdom, and accuracy? In this type of scientific enquiry, even men trained from childhood in the best of disciplines do not always make good judges. It would be an odd thing if persons who were trained to win competitions, but who had so little natural talent that they failed even there—before one day turning up as gymnastic trainers—were the only individuals endowed with such prodigious understanding. The reality, though, is that wakefulness and intelligent thought, not sleep, are conducive to sharpness of wit; and it is an almost universally approved proverb—because it happens to be perfectly true—that a fat stomach does not make a fine mind. The only possibility that remains is that the dust may have presented them with their great wisdom. It would, however, be a little difficult to imagine mud as the progenitor of wisdom, when one observes that it is the habitual abode of hogs. Nor would one normally consider the lavatories, in which they pass so much of their time, a fertile breeding ground for mental brilliance. And yet these are their only activities: it has been plainly observed that they spend their entire lives in a perpetual round of eating, drinking, sleeping, excreting, or rolling in dust and in mud. Such people may be dismissed. *Thras.* 37-38, III.84.15-85.19 Helmreich = V.877.15-879.6 K.; transl. Singer (1997)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This comparison is used by Galen many times, e.g. *Diff. Resp.* I.12, VII.789.14-16 K., *Diff. Puls.* 2.5, VIII.589.7-8 K., *MM* 1.9, X.73.7-9 K., *HNH* II.22, 85.24-25 Mewaldt = XV.168.7-8 K.

<sup>13</sup> τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ πλεον εἴη τοῖς χθές μὲν καὶ πρώην πετταυμένοις τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν ἐμπίπλασθαι τε καὶ κοιμάσθαι, τόλμης δ’ εἰς τοσοῦτον ἤκουσιν, ὥσθ’ ὑπὲρ ὧν οὐδ’ οἱ ἰκανῶς ἠσκηκότες <τὴν> ἀκολουθῶν τε καὶ μαχομένων διάγνωσιν ἔχουσιν εὐπετώσ ἀποφῆνασθαι, περὶ τούτων ἀναισχύντως διατείνεσθαι; τί μάθειεν ἂν οὔτοι βαθὺ καὶ σοφὸν καὶ ἀκριβὲς ἀκούσαντες θεώρημα; θαυμαστὸν μὲντ’ ἂν ἦν, εἰ τοῖς μὲν ἐκ παιδῶν ἀσκουμένοις ἐν τοῖς ἀρίστοις μαθήμασιν οὐχ ἄπασιν ὑπάρχει κριταῖς ἀγαθοῖς εἶναι τῆς τοιαύτης θεωρίας, ὅσοι δ’ ἀσκούνται μὲν, ὥστ’ ἐν ἄθλοισι νικᾶν, ἀφρεῖς δ’ ὄντες κάκει στεφάνων μὲν ἠτύχησαν, ἐξαφνης δ’ ἀνεφάνησαν γυμνασταί,

This section equates athletes with hogs (cf. the similar comparison in *Character Traits*, p. 21) and thus renders them examples of moral unsoundness not only for their fellow-athletes, but for humanity in general. This abstractive perspective gains more weight in the light of Galen's purposeful linguistic selection, since he uses what he calls a 'universally approved' proverb, matching his similarly framed locution 'This is generally acknowledged' in the *Character Traits* passage cited above. The proverb 'a fat stomach does not make a fine mind' prioritises mental brilliance over disgraceful bodybuilding in a manner that would have been instantly recognisable to his highly literate audience. Expressions such as these that place stress on generalisable morals do not just enable Galen to make or clinch a point. They are also potent moral statements, focalised around the audience's underlying sensibilities concerning contemporary morality. In essence, Galen repeats what his readers would already have known as a matter of common sense and everyday moral knowledge. But the narrativity in which he embeds this commonsensical ethics gives rise to a strong moralising 'impulse' in his works<sup>14</sup> that speaks to contemporary readers. In this passage from *Thrasymbulus*, the intricate association of athletes with a life of inertia, the imagery of lavatories, excretions, mud and dust underpinning the comparison with pigs, and their resounding disavowal by both Galen and all thinking men, would easily have made such life options unpalatable.

Thus far we have discussed cases of hortatory advice communicated through nominally objective rhetoric. This conveys general pronouncements regarding human life and morality to non-specific recipients. Yet, there are also examples like the following one given below, in which Galen's persona takes centre-stage to articulate his moral beliefs in a dynamic fashion:

τούτοις ἄρα μόνοις ὑπάρξει νοῦς περιττός. καὶ μὴν ἐργήγορσις μᾶλλον καὶ φροντίς οὐκ ἀμαθῆς ἢ ὕπνος ὁξύν τὸν νοῦν ἀπεργάζονται καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς ἀπάντων σχεδὸν ἀνθρώπων ἄδεται, διότι πάντων ἔστιν ἀληθέστατον, ὡς γαστήρ ἢ παχεῖα τὸν νοῦν οὐ τίκει τὸν λεπτόν. ἴσως οὖν ἡ κόνις ἔτι μόνη σοφίαν αὐτοῖς ἔδωκ' ἴσαστο. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πηλόν, ἐν ᾧ πολλὰκις ἐκυλινδοῦντο, τίς ὑπολαμβάνει σοφίας εἶναι δημιουργὸν ὄρων γε καὶ τοὺς σὺς ἐν αὐτῷ διατρίβοντας; ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς ἀποπᾶτοις εἰκός, ἐν οἷς διημέρευον, ἀγχίνοιαν φύεσθαι. καὶ μὴν παρὰ ταῦτ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο πρότερον ἔπραττον· ὅλον γὰρ ἐωρῶμεν αὐτῶν τὸν βίον ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ περιόδῳ συστρεφόμενον ἢ ἐσθιόντων ἢ πίνοντων ἢ κοιμωμένων ἢ ἀποπατούντων ἢ κυλινδομένων ἐν κόνει τε καὶ πηλῷ. Τούτους οὖν ἀποπέμψαντες.

<sup>14</sup> White (1980: 26): 'Where, in any account of reality, narrativity is present, we can be sure that morality or a moralizing impulse is present too.' Pelling (1995: 218) states that the moral background of the ancient readers predisposes them to embrace the moral ideas presented in the text. This he calls 'a two-way process', 'with the audience ready for the text, and the text affecting the audience'.

What I have said many times [in the past] I will reiterate now as well, convinced that it is very difficult for those who have reached the point of becoming slaves to a sect to change direction towards truth. Those, however, who are both considerate and genuine lovers of truth, they I hope will safeguard the qualifications given to us by nature concerning our activities in life, namely experience and reason. . . . For false opinions can preoccupy the souls of humans and render them not just deaf but also blind to the things that other people can clearly see.<sup>15</sup> *Comp. Med. Loc.* 8.1, XIII.116.1-117.5 K.; transl. mine

This passage introduces the eighth Book of *The Composition of Drugs According to Places*. It emphasises the need to engage with truth, which in turn ensures the right application of experience and rationality, the principal methodological tools in Galen's pharmacology. Galen's preaching, communicated through the use of an emphatic 'I' this time, portrays him as a moral authority by describing his guidance as having a long history and (it is implied) been so successful as to deserve reiterating. This rhetorical manoeuvre also has a direct bearing on the author's relation to his readers: he expects them to be thoughtful (συνετοί) enough to fulfil his hopes of their embracing the truth, despite the difficulties he mentions associated with that task. The grave consequences mentioned at the end of the passage of giving oneself up to falsehoods (portrayed as metaphorical blindness and deafness) are particularly dire and are connected with a risk of psychic corrosion. They therefore act as a warning, encouraging a proper moral stance towards truth. As has become obvious by now, Galen sets great store by seeking after truth (φιλαλήθεια), making it the backbone of his scientific approach on a methodological and epistemological plane. But this same virtue is also fervently espoused in his ethics, since knowledge of the truth is cast as being able to bring about the improvement of character (βελτίονα τὸ ἦθος)<sup>16</sup> but also individual flourishing (εὐδαιμονίαν),

<sup>15</sup> "Ὅπερ αἰεὶ λέγω καὶ νῦν ἐρῶ, πεπεισμένοις ὅτι χαλεπώτατόν ἐστι μεταστῆναι πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοὺς φθάσαντας αἰρέσει δουλεύειν. ὅσοι δὲ συνετοὶ τε ἄμα καὶ ἀληθείας ὄντως φίλοι, τούτους ἐλπίζω φυλάξειν τὰ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως ἡμῖν δοθέντα κριτήρια τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων, ἐμπειρίαν καὶ λόγον. . . αἱ γὰρ τοὶ ψευδεῖς δόξαι, προκαταλαμβάνουσαι τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οὐ μόνον κωφοὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τυφλοὺς ἐργάζονται τῶν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐναργῶς ὀρωμένων.

<sup>16</sup> 'For two things must be done: this latter part [i.e. the reasoning part] must acquire knowledge of the truth, and the affective movements must be blunted by habituation to good practices, if one is to point to an improvement in the man's character' (χρὴ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐπιστήμην λαβεῖν τῶν ἀληθῶν καὶ τὰς κατὰ πάθος δὲ κινήσεις ἀμβλυθηῖναι χρῆστοις ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἐθισθείσας εἴ τις μέλλοι βελτίονα τὸ ἦθος ἀποδείξειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον), *PHP* 5.5, 322.24-16 DL = V.465.13-16 K.; transl. De Lacy.

predicated on freedom from corrosive passions.<sup>17</sup> Galen's fixation with truth may echo the *topos* of the Imperial-era moralist tradition whereby happiness is grounded on true understanding, extirpating deceptive perceptions liable to rouse passions. This is what Galen himself asserts in the second part of his *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, where he addresses moral errors *qua* faulty judgments (more on this in Chapter 6). Consequently, truth upholds virtue, a view also espoused in the *Tabula of Cebes*, an allegory of moral life dated to the early centuries of the common era that situates truth at the very core of the moral universe.

Having looked at Galen's exhortation in terms of his escalated participation in the text, from impersonal to authoritative, we now turn more concretely to the role of the reader in textual situations relating to moralism. We have observed that Galen's readership are the beneficiaries of his moral teaching, furnished with tips on the sort of values they should base their lives on, hinging on what should naturally obtain in science and society at large. Yet there are also cases in which the reader is personally invoked within the text, requested to take an active position on what they read, by musing over it and (alongside Galen) assessing conflicting behaviours before determining which one to adopt.<sup>18</sup> Such active interrogation of the narrated material corresponds exactly to the kind of reading skills

<sup>17</sup> 'If, then, you remove from the would-be enquirer after truth self-regard, self-love, love of esteem and reputation, conceitedness, and love of money, in the way in which I have described, he will definitely arrive with a previous schooling in it; and after a period of not just months but years will proceed to the enquiry regarding those doctrines which are capable of leading to happiness and unhappiness' (ἐάν οὖν ἐξέλης τοῦ μέλλοντος ἀλήθειαν ζητήσῃν ἀλαζονείαν φιλαυτίαν φιλοτιμίαν φιλοδοξίαν δοξοσοφίαν φιλοχρηματίαν, ἐφ' ἣν εἶπον ὁδόν, ἀφίξεται πάντως <τ'> ἐν αὐτῇ [τε] προγυμνασάμενος, οὐ μῆσιν, ἀλλ' ἔτεσι ποθ' ὕστερον ζητήσῃ τα πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν τε καὶ κακοδαιμονίαν ἄγειν δυνάμενα δόγματα), *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 48.14-18 DB = V.70.7-12 K.; transl. Singer (2013). On the connection between truth and happiness in Imperial-era ethics, see Trapp (2007: 31).

<sup>18</sup> This coincides with the high expectations Galen has of his ideal reader, whom he wishes to be able to cleverly discover hidden meanings in the process of reading and draw out conclusions for themselves, using their innate intelligence. E.g. *Med. Exp.* 2, 87 Walzer (extant only in Arabic): 'As for the readers of my book, they must use their discernment and powers of reasoning when considering both arguments, and, after critically weighing their merits, see which of the two is more correct. For the reader who has attentively and eagerly exercised his mind in this book will the more easily and readily comprehend what I have dealt with in my book on the *ariste haïresis*' (transl. Walzer and Frede). Cf. ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλὰ τῶν μὴ λεγομένων ἐξ ἐμφύτου συνέσεως εὐρίσκεῖς εὐφυῶς ('but also learn from your native intelligence understanding many of the things which are not said', transl. Leigh), [*Ther. Pis.*] 1.6, 3.19-4.1 Boudon-Millot = XIV.212.5-7 K. Johnson (2010: 81-84) speaks of Galen's 'invited' reader who is actively engaged, careful, naturally intelligent, retentive and hard-working.

ancient pedagogy attempted to foster.<sup>19</sup> Galen seems well attuned to these educational currents:

It is time now for you, my reader, to consider which chorus you will join, the one that gathers around Plato, Hippocrates, and the others who admire the works of Nature, or the one made up of those who blame her because she has not arranged to have the superfluities discharged through the feet. Anyone who dares to say these things to me has been spoiled by luxury to such an extent that he considers it a hardship to rise from his bed when he voids, thinking that man would be better constructed if he could simply extend his foot and discharge the excrement through it. How do you suppose such a man feels and acts in private? How wantonly he uses all the openings of his body? How he maltreats and ruins the noblest qualities of his soul, crippling and blinding that godlike faculty by which alone Nature enables a man to behold the truth, and allowing his worst and most bestial faculty to grow huge, strong, and insatiable of lawless pleasures and to hold him in a wicked servitude! But if I should speak further of such fatted cattle, right-thinking men would justly censure me and say that I was desecrating the sacred discourse which I am composing as a true hymn of praise to our Creator . . .<sup>20</sup> *UP* 3.10, 173.11-174.8 Helmreich = III.236.8-237.11 K.; transl. May

In the majority of passages that we have hitherto explored, Galen's audience were invited to approve, almost intuitively, a nexus of uncontroversial dispositions in the form of Kantian moral rules.<sup>21</sup> Their role was limited to assimilating Galen's ready-made advice into their personal moral

<sup>19</sup> Konstan (2006) explains the audience's active involvement in the reading of ancient texts in the light of their educational experiences in the classroom, especially their immersion in question-and-answer exercises which would have honed their critical skills, or by associating it with the long-standing commentary tradition that expected an equally engaged reading of ancient, prototypical works. See also Duff (2011) on Plutarch's critical readers.

<sup>20</sup> ὦρα δὴ καὶ σοὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς γράμμασιν ὁμιλοῦντι σκοπεῖσθαι, ποτέρου μεθέξεις χοροῦ, πότερον τοῦ περὶ Πλάτωνά τε καὶ Ἱπποκράτην καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἄνδρας, οἱ τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἔργα θαυμάζουσιν, ἢ τοῦ τῶν μεμφομένων, ὅτι μὴ διὰ τῶν ποδῶν ἐποίησεν ἐκρεῖν τὰ περιττώματα. διετέθρυπτο γὰρ ὑπὸ τρυφῆς εἰς τοσοῦτον ὁ ταῦτα πρὸς με τολμήσας εἰπεῖν, ὥστε δεινὸν εἶναι νομίζειν ἀνίστασθαι τῆς κλίνης ἀποπατήσονται· βέλτιον γὰρ ἂν οὕτω κατεσκευάσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, εἰ μόνον τὸν πόδα προτείνων ἐξέκρινε δι' αὐτοῦ τὰ περιττώματα. τί δὴ τὸν τοιοῦτον οἶε πάσχειν ἢ δρᾶν κατὰ μόνας ἢ πῶς ἐξυβρίζειν εἰς πάντας τοῦ σώματος τοὺς πόρους ἢ πῶς λελωβῆσθαι τε καὶ διεφθάρθαι τὰ κάλλιστα τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀνάπηρον μὲν αὐτὴν καὶ τυφλὴν παντάπασι τὴν θείαν ἀπεργασάμενον δύναμιν, ἢ μόνῃ πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος ἀλήθειαν θεάσασθαι, μεγάλην δὲ καὶ ἰσχυρὰν καὶ ἀπληστον ἥδονων παρὰ νόμον καὶ τυραννοῦσαν ἀδίκως τὴν χειρίστην καὶ θηριωδεστάτην ἔχοντα δύναμιν; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως εἰ τοιούτων ἐπὶ πλέον μνημονεύοιμι βοσκημάτων, οἱ σωφρονοῦντες ὀρθῶς ἂν μοι μέμφοντο καὶ μισοῖν φαῖεν ἱερὸν λόγον, ὃν ἐγὼ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀληθινὸν συντίθημι . . .

<sup>21</sup> Both Kant and Descartes talk of decontextualised agents committed to engaging in externally sanctioned moral rules as universal absolutes. This is in contrast to the situatedness, adaptability or social inclusivity of ethics.



performance. In the extract above things are different. Galen drives readers out of their comfort zone; he presents them with a problematic – especially by posing the sequence of rhetorical questions cited above – and tasks them with making reasoned moral choices; in other words, he instigates a ‘moral breakdown’. The term, coined by Martin Heidegger, is key to a modern theoretical framework for describing the anthropology of moralities and refers to a critical moment when people ‘are forced to step-away from their unreflective everydayness and think through, figure out, work on themselves and respond to certain ethical dilemmas, troubles or problems’.<sup>22</sup> In the same way, the decision as to which of two contrasting groups to support in the extract above (a frequent trope in Galen’s ethical discourse, as we have seen)<sup>23</sup> rests on the readers’ capacity for ‘thought’ in the face of moral ‘problematization’, as Michel Foucault put it, in setting up a similar conceptualisation of the breakdown.<sup>24</sup>

It should be noted, however, that even though Galen’s readers are, theoretically speaking, free to deliberate and choose, the specificities of Galen’s rhetorical articulation in the printed passage indicate that the moral option is, in fact, predetermined by his climactic denunciation of people belonging to the second group. This includes men with corrupted souls, who are compared to ‘fatted cattle’ (βοσκημάτων),<sup>25</sup> echoing Aristotle’s use of the same term in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b19–22, in the context of dismissing the life of pleasure that renders its followers slavish, resembling Sardanapalus. Any association with these corrupted men, Galen affirms, attracts condemnation on the part of prudent, self-controlled individuals. Not only that, but not joining Hippocrates and Plato who form the first group and reproaching Nature as per the second group, constitutes a sacrilegious act of the highest impropriety rather than

<sup>22</sup> Zigon (2007: 140).

<sup>23</sup> Antithesis and antonymy have been regarded as prime types of moral vocabulary in antiquity; see Dover (1974: 64–66).

<sup>24</sup> Foucault (2000: 117–119). Foucault is attuned to Neo-Aristotelian anthropological trends, which postulate that deliberation (reminiscent of Aristotle’s practical wisdom or *phronēsis*) forms the basis of ethical praxis and is central to the definition of morality. Robbins (2004: 315–316), sympathetic to this Neo-Aristotelian trend, has developed corresponding views in seeing the moral domain as a domain of distinctly conscious (rather than unreflective) choice: ‘Having defined the moral domain as one in which actors are culturally constructed as being aware both of the directive force of values and of the choices left open to them in responding to that force, we have to recognize that it is fundamentally a domain that consists of actions undertaken consciously . . . Consciousness of the issues involved is thus a criterion of moral choice.’ Likewise, Laidlaw (2014) posits that ethics is intrinsic to ‘reflective self-formation’.

<sup>25</sup> The same comparison is used also in *Ind.* 12, 78.14–16 PX.

a 'hymn of praise to the Creator', whom Galen elsewhere worships for his outstanding wisdom and power (*Mot. Dub.* 4.6-9, 136.16-25 Nutton). Galen's accentuated denunciation has brutish behaviour at one end of the spectrum and divine insolence at the other. As so often, Galenic readers are autonomous, thoughtful entities, but the moralist in Galen rarely shies away from attempting to steer their behaviour.

*Practical Ethics in Technical Accounts*

The [previous Chapter](#) argued that Galen recasts traditional morality by introducing fresh interpretative lenses through which ethical matters may be viewed. We have seen that our author finds further opportunities for asserting the standard truths, and his own ways of challenging reflection on them, mainly through a process of defamiliarising his audience. Readers are made to take a step back, ruminate, perhaps wonder for a moment before subscribing to any moral attitude, however familiar to them it might be. They are also encouraged to extrapolate the moral gist of the various ethical narratives and thinking about how it can be appropriated to their everyday experience. There is an even greater presumption of this moral discrimination on the part of Galen's audience in a group of technical discussions, which are to some extent also concerned with popular ethics, providing Galen with the opportunity for occasional bouts of moralising. As we shall see, in this case Galen is keen to interconnect the moral with the medical by attributing a strong ethical dimension to bodily care.

*The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body* (henceforth *The Capacities of the Soul*) is an informative example of this sort. This speculative treatise tackles the thesis that alterations in bodily mixture (*krasis*)<sup>1</sup> due to food, drink or daily habits produce corresponding psychological effects, for example an increase in hot mixture makes people quick-tempered (διὰ γούνην τὴν θερμὴν κρᾶσις <οἱ> ὀξύθυμοι γινόμενοι, *QAM* 11, 88.3-4 Ba. = IV.821.6-7 K.). In putting forward such a

<sup>1</sup> Or temperament, namely a blend of the four elementary qualities hot, cold, dry and wet. Balancing the four basic qualities in the body ensures health, whereas any disruption thereof gives rise to illness. Galen's typology includes eight states of bad mixture (*dyskrasiai*) and one state of good mixture (*eukrasia*). E.g. *Temp.* 2.1, 39.3-10 Helmreich = I.572.3-573.1 K., *Hipp. Aph.* III 2, XVIIIB.565.8-566.11 K. On Galen's theory of mixtures, see van der Eijk (2013: 329-330) and van der Eijk (2014b: 102-105). On the various methods Galen used to assess bodily mixtures, see van der Eijk (2015).

physiological explanation of moral behaviour, Galen draws on the notion of the interdependence of body and soul which had become prevalent in learned philosophical and medical discourse by his time.<sup>2</sup> And he develops a model of moral psychology that departs from the one found in his ethical works, for instance in *Affections and Errors of the Soul* or *Character Traits*. Here his philosophical leanings go back to Plato's celebrated tripartition of the soul: i.e. the idea that the human psyche is divided into three parts or faculties, the rational or ruling part (*logistikón* or *hēgemonikon*), administering thought, memory and imagination, *inter alia*; the spirited (*thymoeides*), sharing in courage and anger; and the appetitive or desiderative (*epithymētikon*), related to nutrition and desires.<sup>3</sup> Internal harmony comes about when the rational part, assisted by the spirited, prevails over the appetitive, and that is achieved in practical terms by empowering the intellect through rational reflection and habituation. In this model, the body's underlying correlates seem irrelevant to the development or therapy of the soul,<sup>4</sup> as is medicine's usefulness as a contributing science.

By contrast, the conception of the soul we find in *The Capacities of the Soul*, which is also at the heart of *On Mixtures* and to some extent *On Habits*,<sup>5</sup> differs in that it gives much more prominence to the corporeal nature of the soul, and therefore to the medical aspect of moral therapy. It thus captures the essence of a lost Galenic work entitled *Whether Physiology Is Useful for Moral Philosophy* (εἰ ἡ φυσιολογία χρήσιμος εἰς

<sup>2</sup> Galen mentions Plato (especially the *Timaeus*), Hippocrates and Erasistratus as his main authorities on the subject. See van der Eijk (2020). On the body-soul relation in Galen, see e.g. Hankinson (2006), von Staden (2000: 105–116). The interdependence of the soul and body in Galen has sometimes been examined in the light of the concept of sympathy (mutual partnership), on which see Holmes (2013: 163–176). Key primary sources for psychosomatic sympathy are Hierocles's *Elements of Ethics* (written ca. mid-2nd c. AD) and Epicurus's *Letter to Herodotus*. On the overarching thesis of *The Capacities of the Soul* in connection with the body-soul relationship, see e.g. Lloyd (1988) and Hankinson (2019a: 264–274).

<sup>3</sup> In his *PHP* Galen embraces Plato's tripartition-cum-trilocation, also adopted by Hippocrates, which maintains that each part of the soul is assigned a *locus* in the body, i.e. the rational in the brain, the spirited in the heart, and the appetitive in the liver (*PHP* 9.9, 598.26–600.4 DL = V.793.6–15 K.). Galen refines this model through anatomical experimentation and his extensive knowledge of the physiology of the nervous system. Galen's physiologically-based psychology in the *PHP* is outside my remit here. On how Galen went about demonstrating this model of the soul, see Tieleman (2008: 55–59). On how Galen's thesis in *QAM* to some extent coheres with that of the *PHP*, despite their obvious differences, see Donini (2008: 196–200). On how this work functions as a medical programme for the intellectual faculties, see Jouanna (2009).

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Singer (2017: 179–183); Singer (2018: 392–393).

<sup>5</sup> Oddly, *On Habits* does not have a moral component, its germane subject matter notwithstanding.

τὴν ἠθικὴν φιλοσοφίαν),<sup>6</sup> with Galen's answer to that question surely being in the affirmative.

Now, Galen's endorsement of naturalistic psychology (unlike his philosophical psychology, which is indebted to Platonic tripartition) seems, on the face of it, to exclude the power of reason and persuasion, since a person is teleologically defined by the substances of the body.<sup>7</sup> In that view the self-governed moral agent of the ethical works, who enjoys ample access to education and philosophy as a way of improving his moral condition, is eclipsed by the essentially helpless embodied entity of the physicalist works, whose 'nature outweighs nurture', as Jim Hankinson put it.<sup>8</sup> As I will go on to show, this surface reading needs to be questioned, first because, apart from the body's biological make-up (which is connate and hence external to the agent),<sup>9</sup> there is also its environment, which people can regulate by exercising voluntary action.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, and most importantly for current purposes, because in his physicalist accounts Galen presents the agents' administration of bodily parameters aimed at their intellectual and ethical amelioration as being inextricably entangled with a discriminating application of moral advice.<sup>11</sup> Galen thus preserves the concept of their free will as psychological and moral subjects. His support of personal accountability is also in tune with his philosophical opinion that reasoned choice (*prohairesis*) informs people's actions and the consequences thereof (more on this in Chapters 4 and 5), and that virtue is a deliberative state involving acts of will,<sup>12</sup> not a passive condition.

<sup>6</sup> *Lib. Prop.* 19, 172.17–173.1 Boudon-Millot = XIX.48.4–5 K. Scholars have interpreted the existence of two alternative psychological models in Galen as resulting from some evolution in his thought.

<sup>7</sup> On Galen's determinism in this treatise, see e.g. Donini (1974: 127–185). The main thesis of this work has been construed from the point of view of modern philosophy of mind as verging on epiphenomenalism, supervenience theory or type-identity theory.

<sup>8</sup> Hankinson (2019a: 272). The *Digest*, a compilation of juristic Roman documents, offers instances of rescission granted to individuals when their mental defect had a physical causation, and hence did not admit of legal (and by implication, moral) liability, e.g. *Dig.* 21.1.4.1 (Vivianus). Cf. *Dig.* 9.2.5.2 (Ulpian).

<sup>9</sup> Natural changes to elemental balance also occur due to ageing, another factor outside the agent's control. Rufus of Ephesus, for example, recognised the existence of two types of *melancholia*, one due to the patient's nature and original mixture, the other resulting from a disturbed mixture owing to bad diet; *On Melancholy* in Aëtius, *Tetrabiblos* vi.9, II.144.26–29 Olivieri. This shows that acquired mixture is determined by the patients themselves.

<sup>10</sup> This brings to mind Frank's category of the disciplined body (1995: 41–43) and issues concerning the agent's self-control or lack thereof. See also Singer and van der Eijk (2019: 4).

<sup>11</sup> Pace Donini (2008: 202), who argues that in *QAM* Galen is entirely indifferent to issues of responsibility. For yet another view, see Hankinson (1993: 200–202), who proposes what he considers a 'coherent, and a sophisticated and explanatorily powerful model of the role of the mind in our physiological functioning'. Cf. Lloyd (1988: 37) and Sharples (2000: 18–22).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b37–1107a2.

Imperial-era intellectual culture uniformly favoured personal liability anyway,<sup>13</sup> confirming the general assumption that character in the ancient world was shaped by independent agents, responsive to the moral climate in which they lived.<sup>14</sup>

A first striking example of the way Galen can blend moral persuasion with physiological analysis is provided by what he has to say about the effects of wine and drunkenness. Specifically, the theoretical discussion of *The Capacities of the Soul* progressively advances to the point at which the build-up of each one of the four humours (blood, phlegm, black bile, yellow bile)<sup>15</sup> is said to cause a shift in someone's mental trajectory, and eventually mentions the drinking of *mōrion* (a type of mandragora), which produces stupefaction, and the drinking of wine, which eliminates distress (*QAM* 3, 18.9-19.2 Ba. = IV.776.17-777.8 K.). Galen seeks to emphasise specifically the physiological outcomes of moderate wine-drinking, which, as he explains, makes the soul gentler and braver, while also fostering bodily processes such as digestion, distribution, blood-production and nutrition (*QAM* 3, 21.1-6 Ba. = IV.778.15-779.3 K.).<sup>16</sup>

Nonetheless, one soon realises that the notion of moderation is developed outside its psychosomatic ambit, being dealt with as a moral virtue against the backdrop of convivial drinking, an important institution for upper-class citizens in the Roman Empire. As his choice of vocabulary makes clear, Galen plays on his audience's daily acquaintance with wine,<sup>17</sup> recognising that this is a key cultural shibboleth in the imagination of the elite. He therefore goes on to offer guidance on how to behave with as much propriety at the symposium as elsewhere. By means of four popular quotations, three from the *Odyssey* and one from the lyric poet Theognis, he enumerates the benefits of temperate consumption of wine, especially relief from bad thoughts and tormenting feelings, as well as its downsides when the drunkenness goes beyond respectable limits, such as incurring

<sup>13</sup> The glaring deviation from this is found in astronomical works intimating that character is defined by constellations (Manilius's *Astronomicum*, Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*), an exception that confirms rather than invalidates the general rule.

<sup>14</sup> What is known as 'input-responsiveness' in modern ethics.

<sup>15</sup> Following a disturbance of the body's elemental qualities, it is assumed. Galen sometimes talks about the disturbance of humours rather than of qualities, for simplicity's sake.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Thumiger (2017: 220-228).

<sup>17</sup> 'this is something we experience every day' (ἐκάστης γὰρ ἡμέρας τούτου πειρώμεθα), *QAM* 3, 19.3 Ba. = IV.777.8-9 K.; 'when we may observe every day all the effects of wine . . .' (ὁρῶντες ὅσημέραι τὸν οἶνον ἐργαζόμενον . . .), *QAM* 3, 19.13-14 Ba. = IV.778.1 K. On the regulated use of wine in the symposium in Plutarch's *Table Talk*, see Vamvouri-Ruffly (2012: 47-50, 101-104).

ridicule in public for making laughable gestures or uttering obscenities.<sup>18</sup> Galen cautions particularly against conduct that could jeopardise someone's harmonious co-existence with their fellow-men, as seen in a similar passage in *Matters of Health*, where excessive consumption of wine elicits irascibility, insolence and lewdness, all critical vices leading to desocialisation (*San. Tu.* 1.11, 26.4-7 Ko. = VI.55.2-4 K.).<sup>19</sup> That Galen's advice here is addressed to a non-specialist readership is also supported by his heavy reliance on quotations, which as Vivian Nutton rightly observes, is a move that anticipates a wider readership among the nobility.<sup>20</sup>

Galen, consequently, promotes the philosophical associations of wine and is aligning himself specifically with aristocratic concepts of restraint. In doing so, he seems surprisingly sensitive to the social interface of drinking rather than its therapeutic potential or pathogenic outcomes.<sup>21</sup> That is a novel approach, in the sense that in this text Galen is by and large writing from the standpoint of a physician, whose standard duties in the area of regimen included the preservation or restoration of the balanced constitution through prescriptions for diet, physical activity and drugs, and not moral guidance on affability or social integration.<sup>22</sup> For example, the

<sup>18</sup> *Odyssey* 4.220-221: 'All at once into the wine she threw the drug, and they all drank it | Taker of sorrow and anger, removing the thought of all evils'; *Odyssey* 21.293-298: 'Honey-sweet wine it is that weakens you – wine, which has always | Harmed men when they drink to the depths, beyond decent measure. | Wine undid Eurytion, the great and glorious Centaur, | Visiting Peirithous the high-spirited, lord of the Lapiths, | In his high halls; yes, with wine he undid his own wits; and then, all | Havoc he wrought in his madness, in lord Peirithous's palace'; *Odyssey* 14.464-466: '<Miserable thing,> that has caused the wisest of men to go ranting, | To laugh like a soft-cheeked youth and set his feet dancing, | And to utter a word which best would remain unspoken.'; Theognis fragm. dub. 8 Young: 'Excess drinking of wine is an evil; but if a person | Drinks of it wisely – then not an evil; a good thing.' All translations are from Singer (2013). The advantages and downsides of wine drinking were also noted by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 14.137. On Roman attitudes to drunkenness, see Gourevitch (2016).

<sup>19</sup> The poetic citations from Homer and Theognis do not conform with Galen's inclination to dismiss poets on the grounds that they were purveyors of falsehoods and therefore non-epistemic, unreliable authorities (on which see Rosen 2013). Thus, Lloyd (1988: 18) justifies their inclusion in *QAM* by saying that this is 'a fair sprinkling of literary allusions . . . which contributes to giving the work a cultivated air. That Galen should seek such an effect is not surprising, even if the quality of some of the material he cites verges on the banal.' As I shall show, the quotations serve a markedly moral purpose.

<sup>20</sup> Nutton (2009a: 32).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Galen, *On the Causes of Diseases* 3, VII.13.13-15 K. The physician Asclepiades of Bithynia was notorious for assigning a major therapeutic role to wine, which he posited needed administering at the right time and in the right quantity (cf. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 7.37, 23.22). However, he does not seem to have given a moral inflection to the use of wine, as Galen does. See Green (1955: 121-125).

<sup>22</sup> In a study devoted to wine in ancient medicine, Jouanna (1996) gathers a wealth of passages from Greek doctors dealing with wine; none of them seems to have a moral bearing as in Galen. A slight exception is perhaps the eulogy of wine by the fourth-century BC doctor Mnesitheus surviving in

doctor Soranus of Ephesus, though acknowledging the close links between bodily and moral health, was against the idea that physicians should ‘break with custom and philosophise’ in treating the body.<sup>23</sup> And along similar lines, the philosopher Seneca was equally adamant that regimen belonged to the doctor’s area of expertise, and that it was within his competence to give advice about the use of wine in particular: ‘He [i.e. the doctor] will prescribe a diet, with wine as a tonic, and he will tell you when you ought to stop drinking wine so that it will not provoke or irritate coughing’ (Seneca, *Letter* 78.5).

Galen departs from such views. As we will see in more detail in later Chapters (esp. [Chapter 6](#), [7](#) and [8](#)), Galen has a wider concept of medicine, which he envisaged as closely intertwined with ethical philosophy, and this leads him to infuse his naturalistic accounts with moral layers, showing special concern for many strands of social and cultural life. Within the context of *The Capacities of the Soul*, our author assigns himself an innovative role by contemporary standards, that of an expert in shaping characters specifically by means of bodily nourishment:

So, then, let those who are unhappy with the notion that nourishment has the power to make some more self-controlled, some more undisciplined, some more restrained, some more unrestrained, as well as brave, timid, gentle, quarrelsome and argumentative – let them even at this stage get a grip on themselves and come to me to learn what they should eat and drink. They will derive the greatest benefit with regard to the philosophy related to their characters . . .<sup>24</sup> *QAM* 9, 66.11-67.4 Ba. = IV.807.17-808.6 K.

Athenaeus’s *The Sophists at Dinner* 2.36a-b: ‘Mnesitheus said that the gods had revealed wine to mortals, to be the greatest blessing for those who use it aright, but for those who use it without measure, the reverse. For it gives food to them that take it, and strength in mind and body. In medicine it is most beneficial; it can be mixed with liquid drugs and it brings aid to the wounded. In daily intercourse, to those who mix and drink it moderately, it gives good cheer; but if you overstep the bounds, it brings violence. Mix it half and half, and you get madness; unmixed, bodily collapse.’ The medical effects of wine are here connected with its day-to-day moral effects; the latter, however, are only briefly touched upon and are not as developed as in the Galenic passages we have just seen.

<sup>23</sup> Soranus, *Gynaecology* II.57 (65.28-34 Burguière, Gourevitch, and Malinas) with Coughlin (2018: 112 and 140-141). Coughlin hypothesises that Galen was influenced by Athenaeus of Attalia, the founder of the Pneumatic school of medicine, in integrating philosophical issues into matters of regimen.

<sup>24</sup> ὥστε σωφρονήσαντες καὶ νῦν γοῦν οἱ δυσχεραίνοντες τροφή <ὅτι> δύναται τοὺς μὲν σωφρονεστέρους, τοὺς δ’ ἀκολαστοτέρους ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐγκρατεστέρους, τοὺς δ’ ἀκρατεστέρους καὶ θαρσαλέους καὶ δειλοὺς, ἡμέρους τε καὶ πρῶους, ἐριστικούς τε καὶ φιλονείκους, ἠκέτωσαν πρὸς με μαθησόμενοι τίνα μὲν ἐσθίειν αὐτοῦς χρητ, τίνα δὲ πίνειν. εἰς τε γὰρ τὴν ἠθικὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὀνήσονται μέγιστα. . .



In this section of the work, Galen is addressing a group of contemporary Platonist philosophers who rejected foodstuffs as a moral determinant (and generally downplayed the physical basis of character), establishing a forceful portrayal of himself as teaching them how to adjust character.<sup>25</sup> His authority is particularly clear from the use of the expression ἡκέτωσαν πρὸς με μαθησόμενοι ('let them come to me to learn'), which is a statement of authority used in other parts of Galen's writings (e.g. *PHP* 2.4, 122.27-31 DL = V.234.11-15 K.). His teaching material includes not purely advice on nutrition but also, as he says subsequently, on drink, winds, mixtures of the ambient air and topography.<sup>26</sup> These are all qualifications provided by Galen so as to help philosophers achieve character improvement, in line with Plato's numerous accounts of this process (*QAM* 9, 67.8-11 Ba. = IV.808.9-12 K.). The oppositional construction of this passage is reinforced in the next section, in which Galen, in his usual way, sides with Plato and censures the above-mentioned philosophers not only for failing to understand or recall Plato's views in this respect but for also being reluctant to do so (*QAM* 10, 67.12-15 Ba. = IV.808.13-15 K.). This characterisation of them accentuates their lack of self-control or unsoundness of mind (*sōphronein*) in failing to become Galen's students, as stressed in the passage above.

In the text that follows this passage, Galen taps into the authority of Plato and refers anew to the issue of wine drinking, citing two quotations from the *Laws*.<sup>27</sup> These exhort the reader to consume wine only in moderation in young age, while stressing wine's usefulness in old age, totally repudiating drunkenness and excess. Even though the Galenic text explains the implications of wine for the body,<sup>28</sup> what the Platonic citations help emphasise is the need to regulate the use of wine on different military, social and political occasions (e.g. on a tour of duty, while being a magistrate, helmsman or active juror) as well as in private life (e.g. sexual intercourse at night). Similarly, when he goes on to briefly explicate the

<sup>25</sup> Also in *Matters of Health*: 'And every year we make many people, who are diseased in terms of the ethos of the soul (διὰ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἥθος), healthy when we correct (ἐπανορθωσάμενοι) the imbalance of movements', *San. Tu.* 1.8, 20.11-13 Ko. = VI.41.11-13 K.; transl. Johnston (2018). The context of this section espouses similar notions to those found in the *QAM* passage quoted in the main text, namely that, since 'the character of the soul is corrupted by bad habits in food, drink, physical exercise, things watched and heard', it is not only the business of the philosopher to shape the character of the soul, but that of the doctor too.

<sup>26</sup> Environmental factors affecting character is a topic that harks back to Hippocratic works such as *Regimen*, *On Humours*, *Epidemics 6* and *Airs, Waters, Places*.

<sup>27</sup> *QAM* 10, 68.4-69.10 Ba. = IV.809.1-15 K. citing *Laws* 666a3-c2 and *QAM* 10, 71.6-72.10 Ba. = IV.810.17-811.11 K. citing *Laws* 674a3-b8.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Boudon-Millot (2002).

content of Plato's quotations, it is the moral effects of wine that Galen develops first:

I would ask you, then, to answer this question. Does not wine, when drunk, command the soul, like some tyrant, to abandon its previous accuracy in intellectual activity and the previously correct performance of its actions; and is it not for that reason that Plato tells us to guard against it as an enemy? For if once it reaches the inside of the body, it prevents the helmsman from handling the rudder of the ship as he should and the soldiers from behaving with self-control within their ranks; it causes jurors to blunder when they should be just, and all the officials to err in their rulings, and give commands which are utterly harmful.<sup>29</sup> *QAM* 10, 73.4-15 Ba. = IV.811.15-812.6 K.

This passage invites a moral understanding of wine. What Galen really wants to examine is the moral behaviour of potential drinkers, from a ship's captain to a soldier or a juror – all entrusted with public duties in both Plato's and Galen's society. In *The Capacities of the Soul*, wine is not only negotiated as a nurturing element, but is also explored in association with its ethical usefulness, as actually influencing certain qualities in one's character, in a practical way in different areas of life, and not vaguely as in the previous passage (i.e. *QAM* 9, 66.11-67.4 Ba. = IV.807.17-808.6 K.). Galen advances this argument based on the writings of Plato. That explains why he concludes this section by quoting a passage from the *Timaeus*<sup>30</sup> that sets 'nurture' (τροφή, used here in its stricter sense of nourishment) alongside 'practices' and 'studies' as 'factors destructive of vice and productive of virtue' (ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ μαθήματα κακίας μὲν ἀναρετικά, γεννητικά δὲ ἀρετῆς ἐστίν, οὕτω καὶ ἡ τροφή, *QAM* 10, 75.5-7 Ba. = IV.813.4-6 K.).<sup>31</sup> This is how the passage from *Thrasylbulus* discussed earlier also works, bearing out its author's 'desire to derive a morality of food consumption from its medical consequences'.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> ἀποκρίνασθέ μοι τούντευθεν ἔρωτωνντι, πότερον οὐχ ὥσπερ τις τύραννος ὁ ποθεὶς οἶνος κελεύει τὴν ψυχὴν μῆτε νοεῖν ἀκριβῶς ἢ πρόσθεν ἐνόει, μῆτε πράττειν ὀρθῶς ἢ πρόσθεν ἔπραττε, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φυλάττεσθαι φησὶν ὁ Πλάτων ὡς πολέμιον; εἰ γὰρ ἀπαξ εἰσω τοῦ σώματος ἀφίκοιτο, καὶ τὸν κυβερνήτην κωλύει, ὡς προσήκει, μεταχειρίζεσθαι τοὺς οἴακας τῆς νεῶς καὶ τοὺς στρατευομένους [μὴ] σωφρονεῖν ἐν ταῖς παρατάξεσι καὶ τοὺς δικαστάς, ὅποτε [οὖν] δικαίους εἶναι χρεῖ, ποιεῖ σφάλεσθαι καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀρχοντας ἀρχεῖν κακῶς καὶ προστάττει [μὲν] οὐδὲν ὑγιές.

<sup>30</sup> *Timaeus* 87b3-6 and 87b6-9 in *QAM* 10, 74.13-75.5 Ba. = IV.812.17-813.4 K. Pigeaud (1981: 47-67) provides an analysis of the physiology in the *Timaeus* and the way in which Galen was influenced by it. Cf. Gill (2006: 291-304).

<sup>31</sup> For this idea, Galen seems to have been inspired by Posidonius. See Sorabji (2000: 255-260).

<sup>32</sup> Rosen (2010: 335).

Of course, in Galen's ethical and other moralising works there is hardly any mention of food or drink affecting moral dispositions specifically through changes in the body's physiology, though there is an emphasis on philosophical control in the consumption of food and drink, which is intended to alert the reader to the consequences and advocate appropriate behaviour. Chapters 6 and 8 will have more to say on that.

All in all, Galen's engagement with ethics in *The Capacities of the Soul* might be interpreted in the light of the distinction he makes in *Art of Medicine* between innate ethical characteristics determined by bodily temperament,<sup>33</sup> and acquired ethical characteristics formulated under the influence of philosophy (*Ars Med.* 11, 309.3-7 Boudon-Millot = I.336.16-337.2 K.). In *The Capacities of the Soul* Galen offers a combined agenda for paying heed to both categories of moral traits. The latter through the philosophical caveats about wine in social surroundings, which are meant to educate the reader in exercising self-control. The former through the proposal that wine drinking in moderation produces good mixture and hence virtue in the soul. In this case, the moderate approach to drinking that has been engrained in a moral life may eventually overcome the impact of inherent *krasis*, making nature an acquired state (φύσιν ἐπίκτητον ἐργάζεται, *Hipp. Aph.* II 40, XVIIIB.554.5 K.), as Galen asserts in another work with reference to the role of customary practices in maintaining a healthy body.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The idea of virtues defined by blending is made more explicit in the late-antique commentary tradition pertaining to the hierarchy of virtues, where at the bottom of the hierarchy are the natural (φυσικά) virtues, those related to one's innate blending (ἀπὸ κράσεως ἐπιγίνονται ἡμῖν) that is arranged in such a way as to define one's moral disposition from birth, e.g. Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.* 8.2, 119.1-7 Westerink vol. 1; Damascius, *In Phaed.* I 138 Westerink vol. 2. The second lowest class comprises the ethical (ἠθικά) virtues, which come about through habituation (ὡς αἱ ἀπὸ συνηθισμοῦ) and 'rise above the blends' (τῶν κράσεων ὑπερανέχουσαι), Olympiodorus, *In Phaed.* 8.2, 119.7-9 Westerink vol. 1.

<sup>34</sup> In explicating the Hippocratic aphorism Τὰ ἐκ πολλοῦ χρόνου συνηθέα, κἂν ἢ χεῖρω τῶν ἀσυνήθων, ἥσσον ἐνοχλεῖν εἴωθε. δεῖ οὖν καὶ εἰς τὰ ἀσυνήθεα μεταβάλλειν ('Things to which for a long time the body has been accustomed occasion less inconvenience than others more salutary to which it has not been habituated. It is therefore necessary occasionally to change the habits'), Galen flags up the role of *physis*, which is not verbally signalled in the Hippocratic intertext. He says that daily practices (e.g. the taking of food, drink, baths, sleep etc.) cause less harm when they become habitual than practices that are naturally less harmful (φύσει μὲν ἀβλαβεστέρου), while they may never cause any harm whatsoever if they reach the point of becoming quite customary (*Hipp. Aph.* II 40, XVIIIB.553.13-554.1 K.). This exegetical section prioritises habit above nature and leads more naturally into his statement that food and drink make nature an acquired state (ἐδέσματα μὲν καὶ πόματα φύσιν ἐπίκτητον ἐργάζεται).

It has been suggested that in *The Capacities of the Soul* Galen advertises a form of medicine whose primary role is to promote moral excellence,<sup>35</sup> and that through its polemical tone the work is meant to raise the standing of Galen's medical expertise in accounts of the soul.<sup>36</sup> The analysis given above and elsewhere in this book shows that moral philosophy in Galen is not in competition with or ancillary to his medicine,<sup>37</sup> but more of a complementary area, a collaborative science, as we shall observe in the example from *Matters of Health* discussed below. This suggestion is backed up by Galen's emphatic assertion that his argument in *The Capacities of the Soul* 'is not destructive of the fine teachings of philosophy' (*QAM* 11, 77.5-6 Ba. = IV.814.8-9 K.), a locution that indicates acceptance and collaboration between distinct disciplines much more than dismissal and antagonism.

By the same token, the ethical narratives we have seen so far do not merely emphasise the patient's moral responsibility in opting for a healthy lifestyle, as others have suggested.<sup>38</sup> They mostly advertise Galen's moralising agenda for his fellow-men, whom he deemed thinking moral entities rather than simply prospective patients *qua* embodied creatures. Even though several doctors, such as Aretaeus, Rufus of Ephesus, Soranus or Athenaus of Attalia, had accepted that disease-engendering customs and behaviours were related to moral choices, practices and obligations, Galen is different in that: a) he brings the soul much more prominently into his concept of health and disease and b) he links the advice he gives on moral

<sup>35</sup> Given that emotions, for example, can threaten physical health or come about as a result of physical or mental illness. Donini (1974: 144), García Ballester (1988: 129), Lloyd (1988: 41–42), Trapp (2007: 91), Bazou (2011: 6\*), Devinant (2020: 24–28). Boudon-Millot (2013: 140–142) simply attributes Galen's concern with the therapy of emotions to his role as a physician who cares for the health of the body that can be disturbed by harmful emotions. Her discussion neglects Galen's identity as a moralist, even though she discusses some strictly ethical works such as *Affections and Errors of the Soul or Avoiding Distress*.

<sup>36</sup> Donini (2008: 200), Singer (2013: 344); cf. Sharples (2000: 21–22).

<sup>37</sup> van der Eijk (2013: 332) suggests that Galen's entry into the ethical domain in his *Affections and Errors of the Soul* is designed to cover the therapy of mental conditions that do not admit of physical treatment and belong rather to the philosophical area. That may well be true. However, such arguments run the risk of becoming reductionist and not doing justice to Galen's concentrated ethical production, as analysed in this study.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Boudon-Millot (2013: 138–139); van der Eijk (2014a: 367–368), who independently says: 'Galen emphasizes the role of human responsibility, and he takes the moral factor in disease quite seriously, ... in the sense that their [i.e. people's] morally reprehensible behaviour leads to an unhealthy life-style that in turn brings about ill-health and disease. In doing so, there is a moralistic aspect to Galen's theory of disease ...'. On moral responsibility and accountability, see Hankinson (2001: 71–76, 155–157) and for Galen specifically Hankinson (2001: 400–402), van der Eijk (2013: 309–310) and van der Eijk (2014b: 106–125); cf. Siegel (1973: 203–219). See also Thumiger (2018) on eating and drinking as involving volition.

health in his naturalistic discussions to wider societal and ethical concerns to make it resonate with the popular philosophical tradition on corresponding issues. Hence, by vigorously shoring up the role of practical ethics in the traditional domain of medicine, Galen is playing a double game as physician-cum-ethicist. His originality by comparison with other physicians in combining popular philosophy and medicine is apparent in terms of extent (an unparalleled number of references to and insinuations concerning morals), emphasis (the soul and morality/ethics not playing second fiddle to the body and medicine) and being wider in scope (his practical ethics go hand in hand with the medical art, given that Galen can take a moralising turn on just about any piece of medical analysis or advice). These aspects loom large in *Matters of Health* too.

This work focuses on hygiene, the art of keeping one's body in good health. Galen's target audience here comprises a well-off, educated group of readers, who are advised on how to follow a healthy lifestyle not in a vacuum, but within the urban environment they live in, and in the face of the socio-political difficulties and pressures they are likely to experience. In light of this, ethics could not have been left out of the account on hygiene, given the way it is socially embedded in Galen's thinking, as seen in the previous part of this Chapter. One of the chief obstacles to health that Galen emphasises throughout is a lack of self-control, which prevents patients from monitoring their desires, leading them into bad habits that disturb their natural constitution.<sup>39</sup>

The beginning of Book 5 of *Matters of Health* is a good test-case for the creative involvement of incontinence as a moral vice within a health-related matrix. In distancing himself from other doctors and gymnasts who had concerned themselves with hygiene, Galen highlights the efficacy of his preventive medicine as opposed to the lack of success of his rivals' versions, accusing them in particular of being unable even to preserve their own health, despite what they preach orally or in their writings. One

<sup>39</sup> *San. Tu.* 6.8, 182.33-35 Ko. = VI.415.15-17 K.: 'Some do not put their trust in it [i.e. the art of hygiene] because they are overcome by the pleasure of the moment (ἐν τῷ παραχρῆμα νικηθέντες ἡδονῆς)—we call such people weak-willed (ἀκρατεῖς) and ill-disciplined (ἀκολάστους)'; *San. Tu.* 5.11, 162.19-21 Ko. = VI.368.17-369.2 K.: 'Some however, either overcome by pleasure (νικηθέντες ὑφ' ἡδονῆς) or due to extreme foolishness not perceiving the causes of the harm, continue on with the bad customs.'; *San. Tu.* 2.7, 59.14-18 Ko. = VI.133.2-6 K.: 'For many who are brought up with defective customs, living a life that is too undisciplined or idle, destroy their good natures, just as some in turn, defectively nurtured in respect of the body, by a well-considered life and work, and by timely exercises, corrected the majority of the deficiencies' (πολλοὶ γὰρ ἔθεισι μοχθηροῖς ἐντραφέντες ἀκολαστότερον ἢ ἀργότερον διαπύμνοι διαφθείρουσι φύσει χρηστάς, ὥσπερ αὖ πάλιν ἔνιοι μοχθηρῶς φύντες τὸ σῶμα βίω σώφρονι καὶ ἔργω καὶ γυμνασίοις εὐκαίροις ἐπανωρθώσαντο τὰ πολλὰ τῶν ἐλαττωμάτων); transl. Johnston (2018).

reason for this failure is, according to Galen, their lack of self-control (*akolasia*), which he links to social ridicule aimed at them, evinced in the adage ‘the doctor to others is himself full of ulcers’ (Euripides, fragm. 1086; Kannicht, *TrGF* vol. 5, p. 1012, in *San. Tu.* 5.1, 136.7 Ko. = VI.307.16 K.).<sup>40</sup> The other reason for their failure is overwork. True, elite ethics requires leisure time, but Galen dismisses the excuse that they lack this, by pointing to his own demanding and often physically testing lifestyle and claiming that it has not led him into similar intemperance.<sup>41</sup> Nor, he says, has it precluded the nurturing of other virtues, among which Galen particularly stresses his love of learning and (albeit obliquely) his love of the beautiful and of labour.

Having established his professional and moral superiority, Galen repeatedly emphasises the disgrace involved in his colleagues’ erroneous attitudes to health, in order to highlight their moral failings:

How then is it not shameful for someone gifted with the best nature to be carried around by others due to gout, or to be undone by the pains of stone, or pains in the colon, or to have an ulcer in the bladder from a disorder of his humours? How is it not shameful for someone to be unable to use his own hands due to severe arthritis and to need someone else to bring his food to his mouth or wash his fundament after defecation? If he were not altogether a coward, it would be a thousand times better for him to choose to die before enduring such a life. Even if someone actually overlooks his own shame due to shamelessness and faintheartedness, at all events he should not overlook the sufferings he has day and night, as he is tormented by his passions as if by executioners. And it is intemperance or ignorance or both that must inevitably bear the blame for all these things. Now may not be the time to correct intemperance, but I do hope to cure the ignorance of those things that must be done, establishing through this treatise a healthy regimen for each specific bodily nature.<sup>42</sup> *San. Tu.* 5.1, 137.26-138.5 Ko. = VI.311.9-312.9 K.; transl. Johnston, revised

<sup>40</sup> Interestingly this fragment survives only in Plutarch (*On Friends and Flatterers* 71F, *On How to Benefit from your Enemies* 88D, *On Brotherly Love* 481A and *Against Colotes* 1110E), from whom Galen must have taken it.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Boudon-Millot (1994).

<sup>42</sup> πῶς οὖν οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἐστὶν ἀρίστης φύσεως τυχόντα βασιτάζεσθαι μὲν ὑπ’ ἄλλων διὰ ποδάγραν, κατατείνεσθαι δὲ ταῖς ὀδύνας λιθιῶντα καὶ κόλον ἀλγοῦντα καὶ κατὰ κύστιν ἕλκος ἐκ κακοχημίας ἔχοντα; πῶς δ’ οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἐστὶ διὰ τὴν θαυμαστὴν ἀρθρίτιν ἀδυνατοῦντα χρῆσθαι ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ χερσὶν ἑτέρου δεῖσθαι τοῦ προσφέροντος τὴν τροφήν τῷ στόματι καὶ τοῦ τὴν ἔδραν ἀπονίζοντος ἐν τῷ ἀποπτάῳ; ἄμεινον γάρ, ὅστις μὴ παντάπασιν εἴη μαλακός, ἐλέσθαι δὴ μυριάκις τεθνάναι, πρὶν τοιοῦτον ὑπομῆναι βίον. εἰ δὲ δὴ καὶ τοῦ κατ’ αὐτὸν αἰσχυροῦς τις ὑπερορᾷ δι’ ἀναίσχυντίαν τε καὶ μαλακίαν, ἀλλὰ τῶν γε πόνων οὐκ ἔχρην ὑπερορᾶν, οὕς νύκτωρ τε καὶ μεθ’ ἡμέραν ἔχουσι, ὥσπερ ὑπὸ δημίῳ στρεβλοῦμενοι τῶν παθῶν. καίτοι τοῦτων ἀπάντων ἡ ἀκολασίαν ἡ ἀγνοίαν ἢ ἀμφοτέρας ἀναγκαῖον αἰτιάσασθαι. ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν ἀκολασίαν οὐκ ἦν καιρὸς ἐπανορθοῦσθαι, τὴν δ’

This passage leans heavily on a perception endemic in ancient thought that regarded physical beauty as an index of moral decorum. The connection between aesthetic and moral distinction formed a value system, corroborating the proverbial belief that a sound soul dwells within a sound body and thus advocating balance between the two.<sup>43</sup> This idea affected people's social perception too, as their deformed body would signify debauchery and hence trigger condemnation by others, who would see them as social outcasts, if not positively sub-human. Galen seems perfectly aware of such attitudes in a section of his *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics VI* (4, 9, 206.23-207.1 WP = XVIIIB.150.8-151.5 K.), where he introduces a moralising note into his Hippocratic source<sup>44</sup> when he says that it is 'entirely shameful' (ἀσχηστον) for a doctor to exhibit scruffy fingernails, halitosis, body odour and other 'unnatural' (παρὰ φύσιν) somatic conditions. That Galen is interested in the ethical components of the physician's demeanour is also seen from the fact that his moralising twist proceeds from his preceding exegesis of the Hippocratic term σχῆμα denoting character,<sup>45</sup> analysed immediately before the passage on the doctor's corporeal filthiness. In explicating σχῆμα, Galen develops in particular the moral rectitude demanded of a doctor, i.e. he should be modest and approachable with the patient, not frivolous or snobbish (*Hipp. Epid. VI*, 4, 9, 205.11-20 WP = XVIIIB.148.7-18 K.).<sup>46</sup>

On another level, as is obvious from the recurrent forms of *aischros* in the passage quoted from *Matters of Health*, Galen bombards the reader with the notion of shame expressing popular disapproval. Feeling shame at one's own failings was another important resource for achieving a happy life in the ancient world, in that it coincided with the need for politesse and respect for oneself as much as for others in the context of the

ἀγνοίαν ὧν χρῆ ποιεῖσθαι ἐλπίζω διὰ τῆσδε τῆς πραγματείας ἰάσασθαι, καθ' ἐκάστην φύσιν σώματος ἰδίαν ἀγωγὴν ὑγιεινὴν θέμενος.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 88b-c or Juvenal's well-known motto '*mens sana in corpore sano*'; see also Herophilus fragm. 230 von Staden (=Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 11.50): 'Herophilus says in his *Regimen* that, in the absence of health, wisdom cannot be displayed, science is non-evident, strength not exerted in contest, wealth useless, and rational speech powerless.' Galen himself referred to Aelius Aristides as an example of a person who had a strong soul in a weak body in the *Commentary on Plato's 'Timaeus'*, 33 Schröder, and thus did not conform to the ideal of a sound body accompanying a righteous soul. See also [Chapter 6](#).

<sup>44</sup> Gleason (2020: 181). See Hanson (1998) on Galen's role as author and critic in general.

<sup>45</sup> LSJ s.v. A.5.

<sup>46</sup> There are moral inflections also in Galen's explication of the doctor's verbal communication (λόγοι) with his patient as well as his attire (ἔσθῆς).

community.<sup>47</sup> In that respect, Graeco-Roman society fits the rubric of a culture that the twentieth-century para-Freudian anthropology of Ruth Benedict has termed ‘shame-culture’, namely a culture in which violation of moral standards engenders shame, unlike a ‘guilt-culture’ in which the same violations give rise to guilt instead.<sup>48</sup> In dealing in more detail with the operation and characteristics of shame, Benedict, along with Bernard Williams, have argued that shame implicates fear of exposure to the stigmatisation and mockery of the world,<sup>49</sup> which constitutes ‘a fantasy of an audience’ or an ‘imagined gaze’ staring at moral transgressions. Both authors have therefore underscored the importance of seeing and being seen and of the revelation of the sight of a moral crime in their conceptualisation of shame.<sup>50</sup> Remarkably, these are all features that in some ways go back to Roman conceptions of *pudor*, as evinced particularly in Robert Kaster’s sixth ‘*pudor*-script’: ‘Upon (or at the prospect of) seeing myself being seen in discreditable terms, I have an unpleasant psychological response, when the behavior or state of affairs that prompts the attention is “up to me” and entails discreditable “lowering” of the self.’<sup>51</sup> This experience of shame (albeit a virtual one in the Galenic passage quoted above) occurs when one’s feeling of esteem is imperilled, and this is particularly crucial in a society in which sanction lies in public opinion: ‘What will people say?’. The Stoics envisioned shame as an *eupatheia*, a commendable emotion that denoted watchfulness for the prospect of justified castigation.<sup>52</sup> This was, to their minds, a strategic means of protecting one’s self-respect, not an egocentric sense of pride and self-

<sup>47</sup> This captures the two basic definitions of the term as set out by Cairns (1993: 2–3): ‘the verb *aideomai* . . . is used in two more or less distinct ways, either to convey inhibition before a generalized group of other people in whose eyes one feels one’s self-image to be vulnerable, or to express positive recognition of the status of a significant other person; the two stock English translations, “I feel shame before” and “I respect”, thus succeed in isolating distinct senses of the Greek term. Yet there is unity in this distinctness . . . the feeling of *aidos*, entailing concentration on the self and one’s own status, is prompted by and focuses on consideration of the status of another, a person of special status in one’s own eyes.’ See also Dover’s discussion of honour and shame in his classic study on Greek morality (1974: 226–242) and Dodds’ analysis of shame-culture (1951: 28–63) that was especially important in making this concept familiar to classicists.

<sup>48</sup> Benedict (1946).

<sup>49</sup> The entanglement of fear and shame is reflected in the definition of shame as ‘fear consequent upon the anticipation of censure’ (αἰδώς δὲ φόβος ἐπὶ προσδοκίᾳ ψόγου), which renders shame ‘the finest passion’ (καλλίστον δὲ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος); Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man* ch. 21, Chrysippus, fragm. 416 SVF.

<sup>50</sup> And not of hearing as in a guilt-culture. ‘Fantasy of an audience’ comes from Benedict (1946), whereas ‘imagined gaze’ or even ‘imagined lookers’ or ‘imagined viewers’ from Williams (1993).

<sup>51</sup> Kaster (2005: 31, 47–48).

<sup>52</sup> On shame as a good emotion in Epictetus, see Kamtekar (1998). On the problematic classification of shame as an emotion in Stoic philosophy, see Wray (2015).



confidence, but rather a feeling of behaving with honour and dignity in performing one's assigned universal or cosmic duties as a rational human agent.<sup>53</sup> Those conceptual parameters, and especially the externalised character of shame, fit comfortably with Galen's own understanding of shame in several places in his corpus (more on this in Chapters 4 and 5), including in the passage cited above.

Galen, then, for the sake of his readers, exploits the sense of being ashamed by making it an instrument for avoiding imprudent actions. This course of action, with its strong philosophical antecedents (especially in Aristotle),<sup>54</sup> enables Galen to articulate a brief moral commentary in this health-centred context. Thus he uses the ideal of an honourable death as opposed to a disgraceful life (ἐλέσθαι δὴ μυριάκις τεθνάναι, πρὶν τοιοῦτον ὑπομεῖναι βίον in the *San. Tu.* extract above). This brings to mind the morality generally held to be associated with Homer's heroes (e.g. Ajax or Achilles), as mediated above all by the Socrates of *Apology* 28b-29a, that was kept alive in subsequent Greek popular ethics. Galen transposes this ideal to the domain of decision-making on health issues: this time shame due to incontinence that upsets one's bodily temperament elicits strong social accusation (and not just ridicule as previously seen in *The Capacities of the Soul*).

The same heroic ideal of the honourable death features in another passage from *The Capacities of Simple Drugs*, where shame due to bodily deformity is also in play. However, in this case there is no suggestion that the patient is to be condemned for erroneous preferences. For the text does not cast him as culpable for suffering from *elephas*,<sup>55</sup> despite the fact that this skin disease was generally known to have originated from the patient's lifestyle, including their diet.<sup>56</sup> On the contrary, the emphasis is on the

<sup>53</sup> Kamtekar (1998: 148–149) briefly analyses the Stoic theory of the four personae/roles an agent was expected to perform.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1128b12 (shame engenders a fear of bad reputation), *Rhetoric* 1383b15 (shame caused by bad deeds that bring one into disrepute). On shame in Aristotle, see Higgins (2015). On shame in ancient Greece, see Cairns (1993) and Konstan (2003).

<sup>55</sup> Can be translated as 'elephant disease', most probably to be identified with leprosy; see Bouras-Vallianatos (2016).

<sup>56</sup> Siegel (1968: 295–300). Plutarch mentions *elephantiasis* together with *hydrophobia* among the 'new' diseases appearing in the Imperial period, which were assumed to arise from changes in regimen; see *Table Talk* 8.9 (731A-734C), especially 734C. Cf. Anonymous Parisinus 51.1-3 (258.1-260.19 Garofalo), Caelius Aurelianus, *Acut. Morb.* 3.15.118-125 (362.11-366.33 Bendz). See also Alexopoulos (2015: 59–70), who argues that Gregory of Nyssa, possibly influenced by Galen's causation of disease, exhorts the audience of his *On the Love of the Poor* not to reject lepers (those suffering from *elephas*), on the grounds that their suffering is the natural consequence of the mutability of human nature, which, it is implied, absolves them of responsibility for their disease.

patient's rare philosophical consciousness ('he was more philosophical than the majority of other men', φιλοσοφώτερος ἢ κατὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς, *SMT* 1.1, XII.314.11-14 K.; cf. *SMT* 1.1, XII.313.8-10 K.; transl. mine) that instinctively leads him to opt for death rather than a life of pain, disfigurement and, ultimately, dehumanisation.<sup>57</sup> The implication is that even if this patient was indeed responsible for his disease, owing to some form of lack of self-discipline, he had the philosophical stamina to bear the consequences of his actions, thus retaining his self-respect. Both sections, then, underscore, from distinct viewpoints, the role of high-mindedness in issues of the body: the former passage, taken from *Matters of Health*, shows that self-control is needed to prevent the onset of disease, the latter, from *The Capacities of Simple Drugs*, that nobility of spirit is needed to face up to disease when it occurs. Remarkably, Aretaeus, who provides the longest surviving nosological testimony on the so-called elephant disease, does not discuss issues of moral responsibility or philosophical attitudes to the disease, which further highlights the markedly moralising aspect of Galen's disease narratives.<sup>58</sup>

It is in contexts such as those just examined that Galen introduces moral uprightness to medical treatment of the body. In doing so, he goes beyond the clichéd – often brief – emphasis of other authors on the importance of moral life to psychosomatic wellbeing.<sup>59</sup> Galen probes the philosophical aspects of moral life in a variety of perceptive ways, informed by his programme of practical ethics, as recorded in other parts of his oeuvre, for example, in delving into the particulars of social shame or in sketching individuals as moral entities and not just embodied ones. Similarly, he

In adopting this position, Gregory refutes the biblical understanding of skin disease as arising from moral or spiritual impurity.

<sup>57</sup> Gleason (2020: 174): 'Elephas is a totalizing transformation of human into sub-human.'

<sup>58</sup> Aretaeus, *Chr. Morb.* 2.13 (85.16-90.32 Hude) and *Ther. Chr. Morb.* 2.13 (167.27-170.24 Hude). The same can be said of the account of the disease in Caelius Aurelianus, *Chr. Morb.* 4.1.1-13 (774.13-782.7 Bendz). Interestingly, the only disease in Caelius Aurelianus which has a strong ethical quality is homosexuality, which is thought to arise from uncontrollable lust and immoderation, and thus attracts moral disapprobation, being described as a disgraceful mode of life, *Chr. Morb.* 4.9.131-137 (848.14-852.25 Bendz). Overall, Galen's preoccupation with individual responsibility tends to be methodical, as can also be seen from *On Problematical Movements*, an anatomical work that compares responsibility in physiological processes (e.g. walking, running, voice and speech) with similar cases of moral accountability. Galen brings up the debatable issue of whether the absence of activity (unlike the agent's active intervention) could be considered a cause in medicine as much as in society. He thus provides examples of a moral nature with important religious, philosophical and legal ramifications. For instance, he problematises whether a man who did not help his friend in a moment of deadly danger is pure enough to enter Apollo's temple or whether the soldier who did not join the army in battle deserves punishment when that army is defeated (*Mor. Dub.* 8.1-10, 154.1-156.6 Nutton).

<sup>59</sup> E.g. Coughlin (2018: 135).

insists that the philosophical responses to disease seen above do not come about all of a sudden, but demand long-engrained training in philosophical education and sustained efforts at shaping proper moral habits. His focus on the social and cultural aspects of health is also decisive. We have seen that it is the social environment responsible for the disruption of the body's normal function that attracts Galen's attention and makes him venture into the ethical sphere, often quite unexpectedly given the technical nature of his works. This aspect underpins his self-projection as a moral authority, another trait not found in other medical authors concerned with similar issues.

The final sentence of the passage from *Matters of Health* quoted above portrays Galen as a moralist renouncing his ability to correct intemperance, stating that this is not a suitable occasion to do so. This points allusively to Galen's activity *qua* ethicist proper in his ethical works, but in the context of *Matters of Health* it may also be seen as a sophisticated tactic of self-effacement. By mapping out the community's inimical responses to incontinence (ἀκολασίαν) as well as shamelessness (ἀναισχυντίαν) and moral weakness (μαλακίαν), vices that play a central role in his adversaries' (un)ethical portrait too, Galen does in a sense correct (ἐπανορθοῦσθαι) incontinence in readers on a metanarrative level, on the assumption that they would have exercised their comparative and abstractive abilities discussed in the [previous Chapter](#), and have had the appropriate reaction – in this case recognising the need to avoid shamelessness. So by bringing out the ethical connotations of incontinence in his technical discussion of hygiene, Galen makes use of the prospect of a metatextual development of character. And that he assigns a naturalistic substrate to character in *Matters of Health* does not mean that the salience of moral philosophy in individual thriving is readily dismissed from his account.<sup>60</sup>

In fact, ethics also forms a close alliance with Galen's medical science when it comes to the learning and teaching of medicine, as we can see from the relevant remarks in *The Different Kinds of Fever*. In describing the characteristics of students of medicine who only have a conceit of medical knowledge (οἴησιν δ'ἐπιστήμης) but are ignorant of a significant amount of the true art, Galen lists a number of vices associated with their ignorance: boastfulness (ἀλαζονείας), insensitivity (ἀναισθησίας), rashness (τόλμης), vain prattling (ματαιίας φλυαρίας). He then clarifies that his writings on medicine are aimed specifically at passing on true knowledge

<sup>60</sup> 'Good health is his constant concern, as philosophy or virtue would be if he were a young man in a philosophical treatise.' Wilkins (2016: 427). 'His' refers to Galen's ideal reader in *Matters of Health*.

(ἐπιστημονικόν) and offering instruction in a didactic manner (διδασκαλικόν) (*Diff. Feb.* 1.3, VII.280.8-281.5 K.), which in general he considers philanthropic (φιλόθρωπον, *Diff. Puls.* 4.17, VIII.764.1-3 K.), most probably on the grounds that his teaching – albeit indirectly – eradicates the damaging passions triggered by ignorance. In punctuating his medical texts with relevant moral reflections, Galen renders them more intellectual, philosophical and fashionable, thus widening the appeal of his art to a larger group of followers. These are issues explored in more detail in the Chapters that follow.

In the [next Chapter](#) we will investigate another important respect in which Galen differs from other medical authors in his treatment of ethics, and that is in his conceptualisation of the role of medicine in society and culture.

*Moral Medicine*

Galen's most penetrating engagement with ethics in works not clearly designated as ethical surfaces in accounts that explore his perception of a contemporary decline in medicine. This recurrent complaint in his oeuvre intersects with that of medical practitioners' lack of suitable training and the related issue of the difficulty of demonstrating medical methodology to be grounded on robust logical foundations. Interestingly, in Galen's opinion, at the root of this sad state of affairs were defective passions, either by being destructive of the proper function of the medical art *tout court*, or, on a more complex level, as symptomatic of an intense antagonism between Galen and others, which would eventually highlight the moral depravity of the science and society of his day. The 'others' are Galen's medical opponents, but most frequently they are sophists, either in the literal, operative sense (as per the title of Philostratus's *Lives of the Sophists*) or metaphorically as cunning doctors, following the Platonic interpretation of sophists as practitioners of devious, over-elaborate and dishonest arguments, as we will see in more detail in [Chapter 7](#).

But what issues does this 'otherness' entail for Galen? What exactly is his problem with the members of this group that he has placed in the artificial category of people who get everything morally and intellectually wrong? For one thing, he says they are ignorant, lazy and liars. Furthermore, they nitpick and prattle excessively, waste their time in unproductive quarrelling over words and their meanings, make misjudgments, yield to self-contradictions and mislead inexperienced people through invalid arguments.<sup>1</sup> In a nutshell, they fail to obey the rules of Galen's authentic science, characterised by a firm commitment to truth, accuracy, clarity, economy and hard work. It is from this critical dichotomy that Galen's ethical concerns flow, when he aspires to see scientific research uncontaminated by love of discord, spite and other corresponding vices that

<sup>1</sup> See von Staden (1997b: 33–36) for a summary of the sophists' faults in Galen.

instigate the degraded version of science described above. For Galen medicine should be above all a moral art, just as he claims to have professed and practised it himself. This is at odds with the Stoic mindset represented, for example, by Diogenes of Babylon in Cicero's *On Duties* 3.51-64 in the context of a celebrated discussion about the morality of the merchant. Here a *technē* and its practitioners are said to be immune to moral uprightness, provided that their ministrations produce an end that is beneficial to life. Galen's own view is radically different, contending as he does that the usefulness of a craft or a profession should always be enmeshed with the honourable, and especially so for medicine. This moral viewpoint is captured in Galen's idealised perception of himself as a cleanser or purifier of other people's souls, always allowing truth to prevail (καθαρόν ἦδη τῆ ψυχῆ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἔχων, *SMT* 1.40, XI.457.17-458.2 K.), in imitation of his idol Hippocrates (καθαρὰν ἐργασαμένω τὴν ψυχὴν, *Hipp. Art.* 1.6, XVIII B.340.16-19 K.).

Galen's subjective description of the lamentable failure of medicine is not just a rhetorical technique for publicising his superiority in relation to his colleagues. Rather, it has a strong philosophical basis, which leads me to argue here and in what follows in favour of it being part of his programme that advocates for a moralising kind of medicine. In *The Capacities of the Soul* Galen (taking his cue from Posidonius) is realistic enough to accept that vice is endemic within us and thus cannot be wholly eliminated.<sup>2</sup> For that reason, rather than trying to avoid associating with wicked people, he suggests going down the more pragmatic route of connecting with individuals who can purge and prevent the spread of vice (*QAM* 11, 86.11-87.2 Ba. = IV.820.9-13 K.). This advice evokes Galen's self-identified role as a cleanser of wicked souls in the *SMT* passage cited above, something that makes more sense if we bear in mind Galen's heavily didactic persona throughout *QAM* as a whole (Chapter 2).

Another factor that, according to Galen, can mitigate vice (besides the mediation of a cleanser) is reproach (*elenchos*), namely criticism that exposes aberrations (often in displeasing ways) with a view to bringing

<sup>2</sup> See also Galen's *Character Traits* 28 Kr., where he is categorical that a truly bad nature cannot be improved: 'I think, [however], that someone who is, by nature, extremely cowardly and greedy will not, by means of education, become extremely brave and abstemious' (transl. Davies). This brings him into conflict with Chrysippus, who believed that vice enters the soul from outside, or Maximus of Tyre, *Oration* 1.5, who stated that only a tiny proportion of the human race lacks the natural endowment to acquire virtue. Even Plato's *Timaeus* presents a different perspective from that of Galen, saying that 'no one is voluntarily wicked, but the wicked man becomes wicked by reason of some evil condition of body and unskilled nurture' (*Timaeus* 86d-e).

about moral progress.<sup>3</sup> In developing a kind of history of societal vice in the introduction to *The Capacity of Cleansing Drugs*, our author opines that in the past the problem of vice was far less acute than in the Imperial period, when it had proliferated,<sup>4</sup> because in earlier times reproach had obliged people to check their wicked thoughts, dishonourable actions and injustice (*Purg. Med. Fac.* 1, 1.2-2.1 Ehlert = XI.323.1-324.5 K.). We will see with reference to the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* in Chapter 6 that reproach is one of the main obligations of the critical supervisor, another role that Galen attaches to his set of ethical activities targeted at the healing of vice, whether communal or individual. As has become clear, in order to shield medical science from degradation, Galen fits it with safety valves, unwritten rules, as it were, which he draws from the moral programme expounded in his ethically-oriented tracts.

We will now go on to investigate some examples in which Galen comments on the improper manners of doctors and/or sophists. The crucial element here is that he consistently expresses his moral responses to such manners, ranging from blame and hatred to revulsion and indignation. The first example comes from *Good Humour and Bad Humour* and explains the circumstances under which one can justly attract moral disapprobation. As far as Galen is concerned, we should generously forgive (πολλήν συγγνώμην νέμειν) and indeed sympathise with (συναλοϋντας) people who could not exercise their capacity of discernment because they had not had good teachers. He regards their condition as a misfortune (δυστυχία), which should not incur blame, since it did not involve reasoned choice on the part of the agent (οὐ τὴν προαίρεσιν μεμφομένους, *Bon. Mal. Suc.* 1.11, 68 Ieraci Bio = VI.753.17-754.3 K.). Conversely, those who established schools of erroneous thought, driven by love of distinction (διὰ φιλοτιμίαν), did deserve to be hated (ἄξιοι δὲ μίσους εἶσιν, *Bon. Mal. Suc.* 1.11, 68 Ieraci Bio = VI.754.3-4 K.), and in this instance their errors and subsequent deception of other people are presented as the result of a calculated decision (ἐκόντες ἕξαπατᾶν . . . οὐκ ἄκοντες σφαλῆναι, *Bon. Mal. Suc.* 1.11, 68 Ieraci Bio = VI.754.3-6 K.). Likewise, Galen often proposes unrelenting censure, especially when contentiousness and imprudence are displayed by medical practitioners (ἀσύγγνωστος ἢ φιλονεικία, τάχα δ' ἀληθέστερόν ἐστιν εἰπεῖν,

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Plato, *Gorgias* 457c-458b; Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 452C, *On Friends and Flatterers* 55C, 66A.

<sup>4</sup> *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 41.17-18 I.; Cf. *Nat. Fac.* 1.14, III.139.9-21 Helmreich = II.52.14-53.8 K. See also Celsus, *De Med. Proem.* (17.15-18.2 M.).

ἀναισχυντία, *Loc. Aff.* 3.7, VIII.167.1-11 K.). These instructions on when to show forgiveness and when to blame are in line with Galen's frequent references to praiseworthy or blameworthy attitudes in *Character Traits*; and they are used throughout his medical texts too to inform his audience's responses to problematic behaviour. He also achieves this by labelling detestable agents or predilections with derogatory denotations, such as 'accursed' sophists<sup>5</sup> or a 'scurrilous' desire for reputation.<sup>6</sup>

On other occasions, Galen is keen to raise awareness of the potential risks or serious corollaries arising from certain moral positions in the context of medicine. In criticising the doctors Herodotus and Dioscorides for their contempt for sense-perception and attributing it to their contentiousness (διὰ φιλονεικίαν, *SMT* 1.35, XI.445.2-3 K.), Galen cautions that it is difficult to avoid their garrulity (ἔργον εἶναι φυλάσασθαι τὴν ἀδολεσχίαν αὐτῶν) and useless silly talk (ματαιίας φλυαρίας). He goes on to stress that, once people have been perverted by these last two passions (τοὺς διεστραμμένους ὑπ'αὐτῶν), it takes a lot of effort to teach them anew (μεταδιδάξαι) and reform them (μεταλλάξαι). The gravity of such a quandary is further highlighted when the author lingers on the feeling of fear that this group of afflicted people must have felt, if they had been aware of the fraudulent theories on the capacity of simple drugs (*SMT* 1.36, XI.449.1-11 K.). Following his typical moralising pattern, Galen presents moral passions as disordering the proper workings of reason and increasing the emotional perplexity of those suffering from them. Indeed, even though his emphasis seems, strictly speaking, to be on the intellectual corruption of the victims, it is the moral vice of the victimisers that comes out most clearly in the passage, so that they will be disdained by Galen's audience. To draw attention to the extent to which garrulity and nonsense can be irretrievably destructive, Galen aptly underlines the difficulty, if not impossibility, of intellectual and moral reversal.

The above examples promote a structured hostility to moral failing in the reader through the author's narrative voice. In other cases, Galen's recommended reaction to vice is communicated through the addressee, who is described as sharing Galen's disapproval of dissolute conduct. The preface to *Antecedent Causes* showcases how some contemporary doctors and philosophers, seeking to establish their reputations but despairing of

<sup>5</sup> διὸ καὶ μισήσειεν ἂν τις ἤτοι τὴν πανουργίαν τῶν μιαρῶν σοφιστῶν, 'one ends up not knowing whether to hate more the wickedness of the accursed sophists', *Ven. Sect. Er. Rom.* XI.252.10-11 K.; transl. Brain.

<sup>6</sup> ἢ ἐπίτριπτος ἐπιθυμία τοῦ δόξαν ἔχειν, *San. Tu.* 5.11, 164.22-23 Ko. = VI.372.15-16 K.



ever succeeding in the venture, resorted to showmanship and devised sophisms, or captious arguments. Galen focuses on the abundance of such sophisms in his world only to dismiss them with the ironical remark that ‘these wonderful sophisms’ ultimately made the medical art even longer than Hippocrates had originally assumed in his famous aphorism ‘The art is long, life is short’ (*CP* 1.2-6, 70.7-72.3 Hankinson). Nevertheless, the most patently moral response within the text is that of Gorgias, Galen’s addressee, who, according to Galen, laughs contemptuously at those doctors. Laughter (provoked by scorn and derision) at ethical deportment foreign to Galen’s personal morality is a commonplace in Galen, as we will observe in other Chapters. So, the addressee mirrors the author, who functions as his moral paragon, as indeed elsewhere, such as in *The Composition of the Art of Medicine*, where Patrophilus, following Galen’s example, is a lover of truth and eager to study medicine (*CAM* 135.1-6 Boulouge-Delattre = I.224.1-8 K.).<sup>7</sup> The same Galenic technique may involve intratextual characters on other occasions, as we will see with Eudemus in *Prognosis* in Chapter 8.

Another method with a profoundly moralising intent in the medical texts is the personal opposition that Galen sets up, in order not only to show his rejection of ethical weaknesses in others but also to emphasise his moral self by contrast. This technique betokens how significant the autobiographical component is in Galen’s practical ethics, an observation that underlies the thesis argued for in the light of *Avoiding Distress* in Chapter 4. Galen’s aversion to specific vices is frequently articulated through a stated wish that his peers had acted differently: ‘I wish they would stop their vain love of strife’ (ἄν εὐξαίμην παύσασθαι ματαίου φιλονεικίας, *SMT* 1.39, XI.455.6-7 K.; transl. mine). In *Fullness* the device of a stated wish takes on the subtler form of an entreaty that reveals Galen’s own solution to the grievance and anger (ἄχθονται . . . ὀργίζονται) occasioned by love of strife, which is simply to feel drawn to like-mindedness (*homonoia*) (ἡμεῖς οὖν ἀμφοτέρους τε εὐξάμενοι παύσασθαι τῆς φιλονεικίας εἰς ὁμόνοιαν παρεκαλέσαμεν . . ., *Plen.* 2, 30.17-18 Otte = VII.520.4-8 K.).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the contemporary, pseudo-Galenic *Theriac, to Piso*, where Piso shares Galen’s love of labour and love of honour, [*Ther. Pis.*] 19, 94.14-17 Boudon-Millot = XIV.294.1-3 K. Mattern (2008b) has shown that Galen’s ideal or normative patient (and not just his addressees, as I argue in the main text) is also made to resemble Galen himself. The authenticity of the *Theriac, to Piso* has provoked much scholarly debate, but critics now seem to agree that the work is spurious; see Boudon-Millot (2016: LII-LXXX), Nutton (2016), Rousseau (2020), Boudon-Millot (2021); cf. Leigh (2016: 19-61).

In a context stressing the conceptual ambiguity of Galen's era due to the competition among sophists and the prevalence of fallacies, the 'wish' technique is again deployed (*Diff. Puls.* 1.1, VIII.493.1 K.), this time to dismiss the way the doctors succumb to meddlesomeness (πολυπραγμονούντα), rashness (τολμώντα) and disparaging (καταμεμφόμενον) (*Diff. Puls.* 1.1, VIII.497.3-5 K.). All the above vices Galen attributes to the sophists' special area of activity (οἷα δὴ δρῶσιν οἱ σοφισταί) and makes them superfluous to and outside the remit of medicine (περιττὰ γὰρ ταῦτα ἅπαντα καὶ ἔξω τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης, *Diff. Puls.* 1.1, VIII.497.5-6 K.), which Galen conceptualised as being concerned with the correctness of things, not of names (*Diff. Puls.* 1.1, VIII.487.7-8 K.).<sup>8</sup> At another juncture in the same work, the otiose use of definitions, which Galen tendentiously blunders as a sophistic practice under the Empire, is contrasted to the Greek custom of employing clear language, which Galen so wholeheartedly endorses as to call it the moderate and philanthropic choice (ἡ μὲν ἡμετέρα προαίρεσις τοιαύτη, μέτριος, ὡς νομίζω, καὶ φιλόνηθρωπος, *Diff. Puls.* 2.2, VIII.1-16 K.). Once more, Galen parades his moral self by means of opposition and identifies it with philosophical uprightness and benevolence, so that when he informs us that his choices attracted the insolent reactions from the sophists, readers would have already been inclined to favour his preeminent character while condemning those he presents as his moral inferiors.

It is on this distinction between his philanthropy in displaying sensible use of definitions and other physicians' over-the-top talkativeness (ἄδολεσχία) that Galen bases himself when he invents the negative passion of fondness of definition (φιλοριστία) – a *hapax legomenon* in antiquity – as a feature of the world in which he lived. Driven by the express opinion that obscurity is so prevalent in his day that even three lifetimes would not be enough for the acquisition of knowledge (*Diff. Puls.* 3.1, VIII.637.9-12 K.), Galen attributes φιλοριστία not just to doctors, most notably Archigenes (τὸ τῆς φιλοριστίας ἐπενείματο νόσημα, *Diff. Puls.* 4.1, VIII.698.3-6 K.), but also philosophers, orators, musicians and grammarians (*Diff. Puls.* 4.17, VIII.764.1-12 K.).

The inference to be drawn from these passages is that Galen differs radically from those suffering from the vice of φιλοριστία. Even though he seems to abstain from this and other deplorable qualities, however, Galen sometimes adopts the very practices that he censures in others, including the periodic adoption of an insolently polemical tone. This feature of

<sup>8</sup> See also *Hipp. Aph.* II 22, XVIIIB.503.12-15 K.

Galen's personality has been addressed in scholarly publications, but the extent to which it has been deemed an idiosyncratic aspect of his character has been overstated, given that the epideictic culture of the period would have experienced many other examples of similar acerbic polemic. If seen from the point of view of practical ethics, with which I am concerned here, Galen's harsh criticism of morally despicable actions is consistent with the curative effects attributed to reprimand in other moralists. Plutarch, for example, argues that any gibe targeted at the improvement of character (πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν ἤθους) should be accepted mildly and treated as constructive criticism by an educated and liberal man (*On Listening to Lectures* 46C-47B). Likewise, the rebuke designed to elicit pangs of conscience and repentance is considered both kindly and healing (θεραπευτικός) (*Political Precepts* 810C; cf. 803C).<sup>9</sup> Dio of Prusa's *Oration* 8.5 is in the same spirit. This explanation might therefore offer a new reading of Galen's adoption of polemics. Rather than understanding it as a self-contradiction (by assailing others Galen is not practising what he is preaching),<sup>10</sup> this analysis marks out the moralising potential of Galen's deployment of censure, which has a philosophical origin and practical orientation. As such it could be deemed part of the 'co-operative ideals', an umbrella phrase coined by Jason König to amend the one-sided scholarly focus on the competitive value-system of Greek medicine, of Galen's character and work.<sup>11</sup>

It is, then, within the tradition of a morally beneficial polemic that Galen's attack against Thessalus, the founder of the Methodists, may also be construed, despite its agonistic implications. As we will observe in more detail in [Chapter 8](#), Galen's main issue with Thessalus is his brashness, attested in the disgraceful views he held regarding the attainment of

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *On Friends and Flatterers* 72F, 73E; *Old Men in Public Affairs* 795A-B.

<sup>10</sup> In an early study, Nutton (1979: 180) spoke of 'Galen's inconsistency' of character: 'He attacks foreigners who come to Rome, though he is one himself: he criticises their greed for gold, but rejoices in the money he gets from Boethus. Is this rhetorical nonsense? or a display of thick skinned indifference to the opinions of others? or a sign of Galen's psychological confusion?' By the same token, Ilberg (1897: 617) was irritated by Galen's combative attitude, suggesting that Galen has a low character. I concur with Hankinson's (2008: 23-24) response to Nutton and Ilberg. His evaluation of Galen's polemic, encapsulated in his expression 'Desperate times called for desperate measures', shows that rhetorical excess and polemics were inherent traits of Second Sophistic culture, and hence permissible methods for Galen to make use of. Likewise, Lloyd (2008: 45) notes that Galen's 'readiness to take on and defeat whatever rivals stood in his way' was 'the quality you evidently needed to make your way as an elite doctor in the society in which he lived'. Also Mattern (1999: 18): 'In this competitive context, the aggressive polemics that punctuate much of Galen's work, and the boasting self-confidence of his style, should come as no surprise: self-promotion and combativeness were necessary qualities for success in his society.'

<sup>11</sup> König (2005: 261-274).

medical qualifications (a science he thought could be taught within a mere six months) and the role of bygone authorities in medical theory and practice (he notoriously despised Hippocrates, considering himself distinctly superior to the father of medicine). By the same token, it is Thessalus's infuriating shamelessness that motivates Galen to arm himself with weapons familiar to Thessalus himself:

Nevertheless, such a man feels no shame when he awards himself the crown. Accordingly, I think it falls to me to say something to him regarding his insolence toward the ancients, although it is certainly not my custom to refute harshly those who are foolish.<sup>12</sup> *MM* 1.2, X.8.10-13 K.; transl. Johnston and Horsley

We have already noted that transformative reproach is part and parcel of Galen's tool kit as a moral supervisor, and that he exonerates it from blame, so as to make it a fundamental medium of his moralism. Yet why Galen denies that it is his custom to reproach the guilty in the passage above remains a mystery. Why does he feel the need to apologise for his reprimand, given that he could have easily vindicated it, as argued above?

Another polemical intertext might illuminate the issue. In *Against Julian* Galen indicts the Methodist Julian for unabashed over-talking, insolence and recklessness, comparing him with Thessalus. Galen states that it is for the purposes of reproaching (ἐλέγξειν) a stupid, ignorant man who pretends to wisdom and prattles all the time that he will use harsher words than he normally would (*Adv. Jul.* 2, 39.4-8 Wenkebach = XVIII A.254.7-12 K.). So, again, he pleads for the audience's forgiveness, requesting that they do not blame him for his chastisement (ὄπως μὴ καταγνωσθῶ πρὸς τῶν ἀναγνωσομένων αὐτά, *Adv. Jul.* 2, 39.3-4 Wenkebach = XVIII A.254.6-7 K.). Just before this section of the work, Galen had also likened Julian to Thersites, an epic character commonly known for his garrulity (ἀμετροεπίαν) and interminable argument (ἀπεραντολογία), stressing that he needs an Odysseus to chastise him with corporal punishment (*Adv. Jul.* 2, 38.8-15 Wenkebach = XVIII A.253.11-254.11 K.). As the text makes clear, this Odysseus is not Galen, for in the light of the previous passage, Galen opts for moral correctives, *elenchus* (ἐλέγξειν), rather than physical violence. This source shows that Galen expands the semantic range of *elenchus* beyond its conventional meaning of argumentative refutation of the Socratic model, to promote its usefulness as moral

<sup>12</sup> καὶ ὅμως ὁ τοιοῦτος ἑαυτὸν οὐκ αἰδεῖται στεφανῶν. διό μοι δοκῶ κἀγὼ, καίτοι γε οὐκ εἰθισμένος ἐξελέγχειν πικρῶς τοὺς σκαιοὺς, εἶρεῖν τι πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν παλαιῶν ὕβρεως. Galen seems fond of the image of the crown as a metaphor for insolence, e.g. *Purg. Med. Fac.* 3, 10.6-11.1 Ehlerl = XI.332.5-16 K.

criticism, as in the other instances we have seen. A possible answer, then, to the question of why Galen was inclined to apologise for deploying *elenchus* is that in this way he created the impression of a non-vitriolic and therefore moderate (by contemporary *mores*) man, who was forced to engage in practices he did not normally indulge in, owing to the extreme failings of others. Indeed, Galen very often admits in frustration that he has been pushed over the edge to respond in unwanted ways to the vices of his foes (*SMT* 3.10, XI.560.15-17 K.; *Diff. Puls.* 4.1, VIII.696.5-13 K.).<sup>13</sup> I shall return to this later.

In Julian's case, Galen declares it dreadful (*δεινόν*) that Julian is allowed to abuse the most well-educated scholars of antiquity, whilst he himself is unable to reproach the Methodist's enormous lack of culture (*ἀπαιδευσία*) (*Adv. Jul.* 2, 39.7-10 Wenkebach = XVIII.253.11-254.12-16 K.). 'Desperate times' indeed 'called for desperate measures',<sup>14</sup> to use Hankinson's phrase, though, unlike Hankinson, the emphasis of my argument is on the fact that Galen's rhetorical extravagance often serves serious *moralising* ends.<sup>15</sup> For this rhetorical ploy of apologising demonstrates the urgency and social utility of Galen's moralism. Through his self-deprecating attitude, Galen both gains his audience's benevolence as an ethical exemplar and directly leads them to assimilate it as they distance themselves from other people's cardinal sins. At the very core of this technique lies a strong comparative element that fuels Galen's apology, reminiscent, for example, of the Plutarchan *synkriseis* appended to the paired biographies of prominent Greek and Roman men. These are prototypical examples of how comparison in works of the Imperial era could have an ethical payoff. Galen's audience are meant actively to internalise recommended lifestyles after examining conflicting manners. That is what we have seen happening in [Chapter 1](#), in cases where readers would have responded actively to the text by weighing opposing groups of moral agents against each other before judiciously espousing one of them.

Interestingly, the critical abilities expected of Galen's readers were the result of a proper education, which entailed the additional advantage of emotional stability. This idea is explored by Galen in passages that associate lack of culture with ineffectual management of passions. For example, in the *Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Nature of Man'*, we learn that Galen's

<sup>13</sup> *Sem.* 6, 196.22-198.1 De Lacy = IV.642.12-18 K., where Galen espouses the vice of *dysōpia*, complacency or excessive shyness, in response to unscientific views on semen. Cf. *PHP* 2.5, 136.36-138.5 DL = V.250.15-251.3 K.

<sup>14</sup> Hankinson (2008: 24).

<sup>15</sup> Petit (2018: 100-102) discusses Galen's polemic against Julian, emphasising his use of hyperbole and sarcasm. The moral effects of his rhetoric are not considered.

exegetical work remains unappreciated by uneducated readers who are driven by envy and slander (*HNH* 1. proem. 9.15-18 Mewaldt = XV.13.8-12 K.);<sup>16</sup> and, along similar lines, in *Affected Places* lack of education (ἀπαιδευσία) produces powerful psychic emotions (*Loc. Aff.* 5.1, 288.26-27 Brunschön = VIII.301.17-18 K.). Galen, then, conforms to the trend in the Imperial period for considering moral and intellectual shortcomings to result from a deficient philosophical learning, and he aligns himself squarely with what is advocated in contemporary moral works, namely that true education (*paideia*) engenders happiness (*eudaimonia*).

The tactics of self-humbling for moralising effect becomes more sophisticated in other works. In the passage from *Semen* below, Galen exposes an alleged personal weakness to engage his audience's sympathies, and then to raise it to the status of a virtue:

Then I decided, as a second course, to go to women, inquiring of those who seemed the more self-observant whether what happened in their case appeared similar to what happened in irrational animals; I would censure myself in this—why shouldn't I tell the truth?—if I supposed that conception differed at all in an irrational and a rational animal; and yet I wanted to know whether they followed what was taking place. I discovered more than I had hoped, so that I did not regret my curiosity.<sup>17</sup> *Sem.* 1.2, 66.1-7 De Lacy = IV.514.7-15 K.; transl. De Lacy

*Polypragmosynē*, meddlesomeness or indiscreet curiosity, is a common conceit in the ethical literature of the Second Sophistic.<sup>18</sup> Far from being a mere foible, it constitutes a reprehensible moral trait, a malady, as Plutarch's eponymous treatise makes clear:

Curiosity is a desire to learn other people's ills, a disease which seems to be free from neither envy nor malice:

'Why do you look so sharply on others' ills, malignant man, yet overlook your own?'<sup>19</sup> Plutarch, *On Curiosity* 515D<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *SMT* 8.proem., XII.1.7-2.6 K.

<sup>17</sup> δευτέραν δὲ οὖν ὁδὸν ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἵεναί ἔγνω, πυνθανόμενος, ὅσα μᾶλλον ἐδόκουν ἑαυταῖς παρακολουθεῖν, εἰ ὁμοίως φαίνοιτο ἐπ' αὐτῶν γινόμενον ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ζώων, ἑμαυτῶ μὲν ἐπιτιμῶν ἐν τῷδε—τί γάρ οὐ χρὴ τάληθές λέγειν;—εἰ νομίζοιμι διαφορὰν τινα εἶναι κητήσεως ἐν ἀλόγῳ τε καὶ λογικῷ ζώῳ, γυνῶνα δ' ὁμῶς βουλούμενος, εἰ παρακολουθοῦσι τῶ γινομένῳ. πλέον οὖν ἔλπίδος ἔξευρον, ὡς μὴ μεταγνώναί τῆς πολυπραγμοσύνης.

<sup>18</sup> This notion has a long history. For its political connotations in classical Greece, see Adkins (1976).

<sup>19</sup> Com. Adesp. 359; cf. Democritus, fragm. 80 DK: 'it is shameful to pry into other people's affairs while ignoring your own' (αἰσχρὸν τὰ ἄλλοτρίων πολυπραγμονέοντα ἀγνοεῖν τὰ οἰκήσια).

<sup>20</sup> ἡ πολυπραγμοσύνη φιλομάθειά τις ἐστὶν ἄλλοτρίων κακῶν, οὔτε φθόνου δοκοῦσα καθαρεύειν νόσος οὔτε κακοηθείας. 'τί τᾶλλότριον, ἄνθρωπε βασκανώτατε, κακὸν ὄξυδορκεῖς τὸ δ' ἴδιον παραβλέπεις;'. On *polypragmosynē* and other kindred vices in Plutarch, see Nikolaidis (2011).

In Galen's scientific discussions, the same trait signifies a positive attribute for a doctor, that is to inquire closely (πολυπραγμονήσας) into the patient's environment (e.g. *Hipp. Epid. VI*, 4, 8, 200.4-6 Wenkebach = XVIIIB.139.3-5 K.).<sup>21</sup> However, as a moral characteristic, Galen considers it to be negative, judging by his admission in the passage quoted above that he did not regret his curiosity, and the generally remorseful tone with which he describes that quality. In particular the shrewd aside 'Why shouldn't I tell the truth?' engages the audience's goodwill, so that even before Galen stresses the fruitful outcome of his moral curiosity, readers have sided with him, because he has been depicted as a man endowed with self-knowledge and the stamina to disclose his failings. Intriguingly, the way in which he solicits the reader's endorsement in this passage seems to build on similar sentiments expressed in the opening of *Semen*, where Galen makes another personal confession:

Someone may censure me for this, but I confess to my own passion, a passion that I have had all my life: I have not trusted any of those who report such things until I have tested for myself what it was possible for me to test. So in this matter too I was not going to put my trust solely in those who claim to have been eye-witnesses . . . and by exercising my customary disbelief, I conducted a double test . . .<sup>22</sup> *Sem.* 1.2, 64.20-26 De Lacy = IV.513.15-514.4 K.; transl. De Lacy, revised

Just as being a busybody may arouse social blame, so too may being a disbeliever, and so Galen humbly acknowledges his putative moral flaw only to progressively authorise it through self-deprecation.

Galen admits to other, more grave mistakes. In the *Elements According to Hippocrates* he narrates, in a lively exchange of the Platonic type, how as a youth he succumbed to fallacies. Even if Galen comes across as a sophist in this episode, it does not detract from his overall loathing of sophistic practices, already discussed above. Conversely, his moral lapse is amply revealed only to be ultimately rejected. The passage in question comes from a setting in which an instructor converses with Galen on Athenaeus of Attalia's (in Galen's opinion) paradoxical view that the elements of the

<sup>21</sup> Unlike *periergeia* (needless questioning, useless curiosity), which is negative: *Hipp. Progn.* 1.4, 204.26.31 Heeg = XVIIIB.15.5-11 K. Galen discourages doctors from practising *periergeia* in prognosis, using the case of Prodicus, who was disdained by Socrates for succumbing to such practices.

<sup>22</sup> ἀλλ' εἰ καταγνώσεται μοῦ τις, ὁμολογῶ τὸ πάθος τοῦμόν, ὃ παρ' ὄλον ἑμαυτοῦ τὸν βίον ἔπαθον, οὐδενὶ πιστεύσας τῶν διηγουμένων τὰ τοιαῦτα πρὶν πειραθῆναι καὶ αὐτὸς ὧν δυνατὸν ἦν εἰς πείραν ἔλθειν ἐμέ. οὐκ οὐδὲ περὶ τούτου τοῖς αὐτόπταις φάσκουσι γεγονέναι πολλὰκίς ὧν διηγοῦνται πιστεύειν ἔμελλον μόνοις . . . ἀλλὰ τῇ συνήθει χρώμενος ἀπιστία διττὴν ἐπιπροσάμην τὴν βᾶσανον . . .

medical art are hot, cold, dry and wet, while according to Galen they were fire, water, air and earth. Through the use of sophisms, Galen the protagonist of the episode increasingly infuriates the instructor, making him upset and angry at first and eventually wary of continuing the conversation due to his exasperation. At this point, the readers rightly favour the instructor, who has to suffer Galen's vain sophistry and thus exclaims:

‘This fellow, who was reared in dialectic and was infected by the itch—that was the word he used—that it causes, turns everything around and twists and muddles everything, playing the sophist with us, in order to display his logical skill. . . . But we’, he said, ‘have not been taught to resolve sophisms. As he devised it, let him resolve it himself.’<sup>23</sup> *Hipp. Elem.* 1.6, 108.19–110.7 De Lacy = I.464.5–465.1 K.; transl. De Lacy

Galen detracts from his moral character by highlighting the repulsion provoked by his behaviour. Central to this repulsion is the teacher's referring to Galen's sophistic practice as an ‘itch’, accentuated by means of the Galenic aside ‘that was the word he used’. The term ‘itch’ is deployed by Galen in *Affected Places* to encourage readers of the work to act prudently and abandon the irritation they have developed in relation to medical sects, referred to as an itch (*Loc. Aff.* 3.5, VIII.148.7–10 K.). Likewise, in *Natural Faculties* sectarian partisanship is said to be harder to heal than any itch (*Nat. Fac.* 1.8, III.125.15–18 Helmreich = II.34.4–6 K.). Itch therefore is a key term in Galen's moralising apparatus, being a signifier either of a debased habit or a moral passion of which one cannot easily be cured.<sup>24</sup>

To return to Galen's impugned moral profile, that is soon restored, once Galen the narrator of the story states that from then on he decided to keep quiet to avoid appearing to quibble (ἔσιώπων ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ δοκεῖν ἐρίζειν, *Hipp. Elem.* 1.6, 110.8–9 De Lacy = 465.1–3 K.). We will see in more detail the philosophical implications of Galen's tendency to maintain silence in the episodes in *Prognosis* in Chapter 8. Here too his silence points to an informed resolution to exercise self-control, a repudiation of his earlier tendency to yield to sophistic loquacity and argumentative acrobatics, in favour of calibrated articulation of sound philosophical

<sup>23</sup> «οὔτος», ἔφη, «τραφεὶς ἐν διαλεκτικῇ καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν ἀναπλησθεὶς ψώρας»—οὔτω γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὠνόμασεν αὐτός—«ἀναστρέφει πάντα καὶ διαστρέφει καὶ κυκᾶ σοφιζόμενος ἡμᾶς, ἵν' ἐπιδείξηται τὴν λογικὴν παρασκευὴν . . . ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς», ἔφη, «σοφίσματα λύει οὐκ ἐμάθομεν. αὐτὸς τοίνυν, ὡς ἔπλεξεν, οὔτως καὶ λυέτω.»

<sup>24</sup> In the same passage Galen uses other bodily diseases to refer metonymically to corresponding vices, viz. λύττα (λύσσα) for rage and μανία for raving.



arguments. Galen teaches moral virtue through narrating formidable incidents of personal moral failing.<sup>25</sup>

The passage just discussed also raises a central issue explored in this book, namely the moral implications of constructing deceitful arguments, which is one of the most pervasive and pointed ethical indictments we find in the whole of Galen's oeuvre. In one of the most illuminating descriptions of it, in *Natural Faculties*, Galen likens scheming physicians who cobble together shamelessly fallacious arguments (ἀναίσχυντα σοφίσματα) with the Daoi and the Getae, the stock slaves in Menander's comedies who excel in cheating their masters.<sup>26</sup> More exactly, by framing sophisms as no better than the devious antics of an illiterate, socially inferior and morally corrupt group, Galen separates it from loftier endeavours such as medicine and makes it an unacceptable form of conduct for his culturally and socially superior readers.

It has been argued above that, in order to uncover the extremity of vice in other people, and by extension invite readers to abstain from it, Galen strategically declares that he is compelled to resort to forms of conduct uncharacteristic of his true self.<sup>27</sup> An extended instance of this features in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, in a setting in which Galen takes umbrage at Chrysippus (ca. 280–207 BC) for making use of invalid proofs in his psychological theories:

<sup>25</sup> There is a similar episode in *Diff. Puls.* 2.3, VIII.571.6–576.6 K. There may be a distant echo here of Socrates's self-deprecating 'philosophical autobiography' in the *Phaedo* (his account of his ill-advised juvenile enthusiasm for natural scientific questions and for Anaxagoras). I owe this point to Michael Trapp.

<sup>26</sup> *Nat. Fac.* 1.17, III.150.10–20 Helmreich = II.67.13–68.4 K.: 'Now such of the younger men as have dignified themselves with the names of these two authorities by taking the appellations "Erasistrateans" or "Asclepiadeans" are like the Daoi and the Getae, the slaves introduced by the excellent Menander into his comedies. As these slaves held that they had done nothing fine unless they had cheated their master three times, so also the men I am discussing have taken their time over the construction of impudent sophisms, the one party striving to prevent the lies of Asclepiades from ever being refuted, and the other saying stupidly what Erasistratus had the sense to keep silent about' transl. Brock, adapted. (Τῶν δὲ νεωτέρων ὅσοι τοῖς τούτων ὀνόμασιν ἑαυτοῦς ἐσέμνυναν Ἐρασιστρατεῖους τε καὶ Ἀσκληπιαδεῖους ἐπονομάσαντες, ὁμοίως τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ βελτίστου Μενάνδρου κατὰ τὰς κωμωδίας εἰσαγομένοις οἰκέταις, Δάοις τε τισὶ καὶ Γέταις, οὐδὲν ἡγουμένοις σοφίσι πεπράχθαι γενναῖον, εἰ μὴ τρίς ἔξαπατήσειαν τὸν δεσπότην, οὕτω καὶ αὐτοὶ κατὰ πολλὴν σχολὴν ἀναίσχυντα σοφίσματα συνέθεσαν, οἱ μὲν, ἵνα μηδ' ὅλους ἐξελεγχθῆι ποτ' Ἀσκληπιάδης ψευδόμενος, οἱ δ', ἵνα κακῶς εἴπωσιν, ἃ καλῶς ἐσιώπησεν Ἐρασίστρατος.)

<sup>27</sup> As König observes, the technique of an author's (fabricated) feeling of compulsion that leads him to some course of action as a response to a situation that upsets him also explains Galen's reluctance to compose works too: 'Galen feels the need to write . . . in order to reverse the situation where he feels appalled by the idea of writing.' (2009: 57). Likewise, Rosen (2010: 330–331) argues that Galen's didacticism in some of his works is 'a rhetoric of inevitability . . . an almost cosmic . . . battle between knowledge and ignorance, pretense and integrity'. Cf. Gleason (2009: 93–100) on compulsion in the context of Galen's anatomical demonstrations.

Interrupting the present discussion, I shall not hesitate to describe my predicament. It was said by the ancient philosophers that when you converse with babblers you cannot entirely avoid all babbling. So being led on by Chrysippus's chatter, I was compelled to give an account of the words of ordinary men and of Euripides, a thing that I would never have ventured to do voluntarily while writing the proofs of such an important doctrine. For not merely is Euripides or Tyrtaeus or any other poet, or any non-expert at all, insufficient authority for a doctrine in the absence of all proof, but even Hippocrates himself, admittedly the best of all physicians, or Plato, the first of all philosophers, is not sufficient authority on his own. And Plato's successors, even if they all burst with envy or contentiously contrive shameless sophisms, as Chrysippus and his school did, will never be able to surpass his reputation or match the beauty of his proofs.<sup>28</sup> *PHP* 3.4, 198.17-30 DL = V.318.10-319.8 K.; transl. De Lacy, slightly revised

A number of points emerge from this passage. First, in terms of narrative technique, the section is thoughtfully heralded as a digression, so that it immediately alerts the reader to the shift from scientific discourse to moral report. This shift is also evinced in the topic under discussion, viz. what Galen here stigmatises as 'babbling', an issue conventionally treated by moral philosophers, which substantiates the impression that we are now in the sphere of ethics. Of course, what Galen dismisses as an act of babbling could be a meticulous argument for a loyal Stoic for example; or what Galen has earlier on attacked as pedantry might constitute a crucial piece of conceptual clarification for another intellectual in this period. So his diagnosis of failure here and elsewhere does not represent objective historical reality, but is rather a personal filter through which Galen sketches the modern state of affairs in medicine and society. This filter helps us make sense of the kind of virtues he wishes to parade and the type of moral path he wants to recommend to his readers. That said, his reportage of the modern world might not be a wholly factual one, but it must contain some truth about what was going on around him in some circles or on some occasions. It is not reasonable to accept that Galen was referring to

<sup>28</sup> μεταξὺ δέ μοι τῶν λόγων ὧν διεξέρχομαι τὸ παραστὰν οὐκ ὀκνήσω φράσαι· λέλεκτα δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν παλαιῶν φιλοσόφων ὡς οὐκ ἐνδέχεται τινα διαλεγόμενον ἀδολεσχοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀποσχέσθαι τελῶς ἀπάσης ἀδολεσχίας. ἔγωγ' οὖν ἠναγκάσθην ὑπὸ τῆς Χρυσίππου προαχθεῖς ἀδολεσχίας ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὰς τε τῶν ἰδιωτῶν καὶ τὰς Εὐριπίδου φωνάς, ὃ μήποτ' ἂν ἐκὼν ἐτόλμησα πράξει περὶ τηλικούτου δόγματος ἀποδείξει γράφων. οὐχ ὅπως γὰρ Εὐριπίδης ἢ Τυρταῖος ἢ τις ἄλλος ποιητῆς ἢ καὶ παντάπασιν ἰδιώτης ἱκανὸς πιστεῦσθαι περὶ δόγματος ἀπάσης ἀποδείξεως χωρὶς, ἀλλ' οὐδ' αὐτὸς ὁ πάντων ἰατρῶν ὁμολογουμένως ἄριστος Ἴπποκράτης, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ὁ πρῶτος ἀπάντων φιλοσόφων Πλάτων. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ῥαγῶσιν ὑπὸ φθόνου σύμπαντες οἱ μετ' αὐτὸν οὐδ' ἂν ὑπὸ φιλονεικίας ἀναίσχυντα σοφίζωνται, καθάπερ οἱ περὶ τὸν Χρυσίππον, ἢ τὴν δόξαν ὑπερβαλέσθαι ποτὲ δυνήσονται τὴν Πλάτωνος ἢ τὸν τῶν ἀποδείξεων μιμήσασθαι κόσμον.

individuals, things or situations to which his readers could not relate either as eye-witnesses or through first-hand experience. These issues are considered in [Chapter 7](#).

Secondly, Galen in the passage quoted above stresses the contaminating effect of associating with babblers to justify how he has been affected by this vice, so that he now babbles himself, contrary to his declared wish elsewhere to remain free from this fault (*Hipp. Epid. III*, 2.5, 81.23-24 Wenkebach = XVIIA.610.14-15 K.).<sup>29</sup> His babbling consists in discussing testimonies written by non-experts, especially poets, whom he generally considers most unfitting doctrinal authorities.<sup>30</sup> This is stated elsewhere too, as, for instance, when Galen discourages his audience from reading Pindar (*UP* 3.1, 124.7-125.5 Helmreich = III.169.15-171.2 K.) or even Herodotus (*AA* 3.9, 185.13-15 Garofalo = II.393.7-10 K.) for the purposes of gaining knowledge, relegating the two authors to merely providing enjoyment.

Thirdly, Galen considers Chrysippus's 'chattering' owing to his use of poetic sources a proper subject for criticism, and this is shown by his bold statement that not even Hippocrates or Plato could be deemed adequate authorities unless backed up by proper proof. Chrysippus has overstepped the mark. He has been acting like a feeble-minded old woman,<sup>31</sup> not a true philosopher, and so Galen associates his prattling with other defects, notably envy and contentiousness, but also shamelessness and lack of loftiness of spirit,<sup>32</sup> in order to dismiss him on moral grounds. Other Chapters in this book will look in more detail into the niceties of such character assassination. But in *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* Galen often incites his audience to adopt only those philosophical tenets that were advocated by an ethically irreproachable exponent. Philosophical 'orthodoxy' is accompanied by moral righteousness. This method seems in a way akin to the Empirics' belief, as addressed by Galen in *The Best Sect*, that the comportment (*tropos*) of the author determines the validity of

<sup>29</sup> Also in *PHP* 3.8, 232.23-24 DL = V.358.18-359.1 K.

<sup>30</sup> *PHP* 5.7, 346.13-19 DL = V.490.11-18 K. Cf. Galen's more flexible stance over the use of Homer, Thucydides and Demosthenes in *PHP* 5.7, 358.7-13 DL = V.503.1-8 K. Galen praises Homer as an authority in *PHP* 6.8, 424.18-426.8 DL = V.583.11-585.6 K. See also De Lacy (1966: 263-264), and Nussbaum (1993) particularly on philosophical (esp. Stoic) attitudes to poetry and its connection with the passions.

<sup>31</sup> Galen craftily exploits Chrysippus's expression 'garrulity of an old woman' (ἀδολεσχίαν εἶναι γράωδην) to make it part of his attack on him, *PHP* 3.4, 196.1-14 DL = V.315.4-316.2 K.

<sup>32</sup> *PHP* 3.4, 198.35-39 DL = V.319.14-320.2 K. (shamelessness); *PHP* 3.2, 182.21 DL = V.300.14-15 K. (lack of magnanimity).

the observational information (*historia*) he transmits in his writings.<sup>33</sup> The less the author subscribes to love of fame and love of strife, the more probable it is that he is telling the truth. Remarkably, in the same context Galen declares that it falls to the philosopher and not the doctor to judge characters (κρίνειν τὰ ἥθη, *Opt. Sect.* 14, I.146.10-148.4 K.), which is consistent with his self-projection as a moralist in the passage from *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* cited above.

We have discussed the kaleidoscope of moral themes and the varying levels of moralism that Galen puts at the disposal of his readers for their ethical edification. We have noted that Galen is adroit at promoting a general sort of moralism (Chapter 1) while at other times he discusses the social aspects of his practical ethics in his physicalist accounts (Chapter 2) or the moral burden of the medical art (Chapter 3). And we have also seen that he deploys a wealth of strategies to that end, such as moralising assault or self-effacement. With this background in mind, we now turn to more detailed analysis of what I consider Galen's most intriguing moral(ising) texts, which will be explored in self-contained discussions in Part II.

<sup>33</sup> Empiricist dogma highly valued the role of reported observations by other parties, what Empiricists dubbed *historia*.

PART II

*Case Studies*



## CHAPTER 4

### *Avoiding Distress*

Mortals have no other medicine for distress  
Like the advice of a good man, a friend  
Who has experience with this sickness. . .

(Οὐκ ἔστι λύπης ἄλλο φάρμακον βροτοῖς  
ὡς ἀνδρὸς ἐσθλοῦ καὶ φίλου παραίνεσις.  
ὅστις δὲ ταύτη τῇ νόσῳ ξυνῶν ἀνὴρ. . .)

Euripides, fragm. 1079; Kannicht, *TrGF* vol. 5, p. 1010

The man who is sick in the body needs a doctor;  
Someone who is sick in the soul needs a friend;  
For a well-meaning friend knows how to treat distress.

(Τῷ μὲν τὸ σῶμα διατεθειμένῳ κακῶς  
χρεῖα ἴστ' ἰατροῦ, τῷ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν φίλου·  
λύπην γὰρ εὔνους οἶδε θεραπεύειν φίλος.)

Menander, fragm. 865; *PCG* vol. VI 2, p. 409

The unexpected discovery of the *Vlatadon* 14<sup>1</sup> in 2005 brought to light Galen's long-lost treatise *Avoiding Distress*.<sup>2</sup> This text is part of Galen's ethical writings,<sup>3</sup> as seen above, and offers a magnificent testimony to the

<sup>1</sup> A fifteenth-century manuscript from Constantinople, discovered in the Vlatadon monastery in Thessaloniki. *Avoiding Distress* covers fol. 10v–14v. For a description of the *Vlatadon* 14, see Pietrobelli (2010) and Polemis and Xenophonos (2023: 27).

<sup>2</sup> *Avoiding Distress* is mentioned in a ninth-century catalogue of Galen's works provided by Hunayn ibn 'Ishāq in his *Epistle (Risālah)*; see Bergsträsser (1925: 40) no. 120 = Lamoreaux (2016: 122) §130. We know that it was translated into both Syriac and Arabic, although none of the translations survive today. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, Joseph Ibn 'Aqnīn, student of Maimonides, quoted many passages from *Avoiding Distress* in his Arabic *Hygiene of the Soul*; see Halkin (1944: 60–147). Afterwards it was cited by other Arabic and Hebrew authors of the thirteenth century; see Zonta (1995: 113–123) and Boudon-Millot, Jouanna and Pietrobelli 2010b: LXX–LXXIV for additional information.

<sup>3</sup> *Lib. Prop.* 15, 169.13 Boudon-Millot = XIX.45.10–11 K.

therapy of *lypē* in the ancient world.<sup>4</sup> When giving advice on the treatment of this same passion in one of his medical works, the *Therapeutics to Glaucōn*, Galen suggests introducing the patient to the direct opposite of the condition that troubles him (πειρᾶσθαι δὲ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον ἀντεισάγειν ἄει τῷ λυπήσαντι), meaning in this case treating him with ‘gladness of heart (θυμηδίαν) in words, deeds, sights and descriptions’ (MMG 1.3, XI.16.5–9 K.).<sup>5</sup> This sort of distraction therapy, grounded in allopathy,<sup>6</sup> a mainstay of Galenic therapeutics for both bodily and mental disturbances, is not like most of the advice Galen offers in *Avoiding Distress*.<sup>7</sup> And that is a primary indicator that in this work our author steps away from the role of the therapist, who alleviates mental disorder through psychotherapeutic protocols that would have been beyond the ken of non-medical experts. By contrast, he puts on the mantle of the ethicist, who instructs on the management of everyday emotions through philosophical means accessible to all.

*Avoiding Distress* has been the subject of a large amount of learned commentary, because it provides valuable information about the production and publication of ancient books and the holdings of Imperial libraries.<sup>8</sup> Others have considered it an important source for adding to our knowledge of Commodus’s cruel regime (180–192 AD)<sup>9</sup> or because it elucidates aspects of Galen’s life, which we can use as a control on the unreliable Arabic biographies.<sup>10</sup> Finally, some other studies have yielded valuable insights into Galen’s philosophical allegiances, particularly in connection with the tradition of ethical writing, but they tend to limit themselves to identifying philosophical positions and arguments, largely

<sup>4</sup> I translate *lypē* in its broadest sense ‘distress’, which is close to modern psychiatric definitions of ‘anxiety’, hence my occasional use of that term.

<sup>5</sup> πειρᾶσθαι δὲ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον ἀντεισάγειν ἄει τῷ λυπήσαντι . . . τὴν ἐν λόγοις τε καὶ πράξεσι καὶ θεάμασι καὶ διηγήμασι θυμηδίαν. These psychotherapeutic activities resemble the ones Celsus proposed for mentally disturbed patients, *De Med.* 3.18.11–12 (124.17–125.2 M.), and those described by Anonymous Parisinus in 19.3.7–10 (118.27–120.9 Garofalo).

<sup>6</sup> This is the Hippocratic principle ‘opposites are cured by opposites’ (*contraria contrariis curantur*).

<sup>7</sup> The redirection of the mind, either visually or aurally, is also referred to by Galen in his *On Problematical Movements*, a work on anatomy in which Galen also speaks as physician. The case concerns an otherwise exemplary practitioner of philosophy (he was immune to servility and envy as well as a lover of truth in words and deeds), who took some time, however, to realise the importance of distraction in minimising bodily pain, *Mot. Dub.* 8.24–29, 160.4–20 Nutton. On distraction in general, see Nutton (2020: 121–123).

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Tucci (2008), Jones (2009), Nutton (2009a), Roselli (2010), Nicholls (2011), Rothschild and Thompson (2012), Dorandi (2014), Singer (2019a), Salas (2020: 16–22).

<sup>9</sup> Rothschild (2014) explores the political dimension of *Avoiding Distress*, discussing passages that ‘convey obliquely disapproving political commentary’ and ‘express political disdain while avoiding direct confrontation and punishment’ (p. 179).

<sup>10</sup> Swain (2006).



neglecting the literary and rhetorical strategies through which Galen's project on emotional resilience is realised in the text for the moral benefit of the reader; at best these issues are treated in piecemeal fashion.<sup>11</sup>

The aim of this Chapter is to examine *Avoiding Distress* as a holistic literary composition. To that end, it will focus on its content, internal structure and narrative setting, in order to bring out the distinctive characteristics of Galenic ethics and evaluate how it worked and the impact that it seems Galen hoped it would have on contemporary society. This Chapter also seeks to demonstrate that *Avoiding Distress* is a unique source in respect of Galen's identity as an ethical adviser and, similarly, in respect of the sophisticated devices he puts in place to promote his moral didacticism. Some of the key topics to be addressed are Galen's departures from other moralists who have treated the issue of distress (notably Seneca, Epictetus and Plutarch) and the extent to which Galen's moralism is informed by the (rhetorical) methods he applies in his medical accounts directed at the treatment of the body. Moreover, given that Galen's *Avoiding Distress* is the only extant work *peri alypias*,<sup>12</sup> it may help us to get some idea of the potential content of other, now lost, essays on this topic.

### Generic observations and individual features

*Avoiding Distress* is a letter-essay in response to a request from an anonymous friend.<sup>13</sup> The correspondent is astonished at Galen's moral fortitude in the face of the calamity of the great fire on the Palatine Hill in Rome in 192 AD and is eager to find out the philosophical mechanisms that allowed him to maintain his self-control.<sup>14</sup> The dating of the treatise to

<sup>11</sup> The recent volume edited by Petit contains a number of such studies: e.g. Petit (2019: 51–61), Gill (2019), Hankinson (2019b), Singer (2019b), Tieleman (2019). See also Kaufman (2014) and Kotzia (2014). A partial exception is perhaps Rosen (2014).

<sup>12</sup> Eratosthenes of Cyrene (third century BC), Diogenes of Babylon (second century BC) and Plutarch ('The catalogue of Lamprias' no. 172) were all said to have written a lost essay entitled *Περί ἀλυπτίας*. There is also a work by John Climacus of the seventh century AD, with the title *Περί ἀπροσπαθείας, ἤγουν ἀλυπτίας* (*On Tranquillity of the Soul, or Rather on Avoiding Distress*, Book 2 from his *The Heavenly Ladder*), an interesting example of how Stoic moral notions were appropriated into Christian ethics.

<sup>13</sup> On the convention of writing at the request of friends and its rhetorical potential, see König (2009: 40–58); on letter writing as therapy for the soul in Galen, see Boudon-Millot (2010a: 128–132); on the form and function of the Greek letter-essay, see Stirewalt (1991).

<sup>14</sup> Unlike Galen's brief references to the fire of 192 AD in *On My Own Books* and *On Antidotes*, the same event is described at quite some length in *The Composition of Drugs According to Kind* (*Comp. Med. Gen.* 1.1, XIII.362.1–363.1 K.). Here the author mentions the losses in an impersonal report, shying away from including the emotional effects of the disaster in his account. The same event is

the early months of 193 AD shows how the recollection of the disaster would have still been fresh in people's minds – a revived reality, as I shall argue – for both writer and addressee.<sup>15</sup>

The thematic framework makes it clear from the outset that this is an essay with moralising intent, belonging to the popularised genre of practical ethics.<sup>16</sup> In referring to more specific typological distinctions between works of ethical philosophy, Philo of Larisa (158–84 BC), once head of the Platonic Academy, established a threefold categorisation: a) protreptic works guiding towards morally adept attitudes and encouraging therapy, b) therapy applying philosophical guidance to particular cases of the treatment of emotions by eliminating false beliefs and c) advice proposing lifestyles through which happiness could be achieved by means of some therapy that has already been applied.<sup>17</sup> It is in the category of 'therapy of emotions' (b) that *Avoiding Distress* best fits, though it may also intersect with the protreptic (a) and the advice on appropriate lifestyles (c), issues to which I will return in the main part of this Chapter. On the other hand, the essay's prescription for achieving freedom from *lypē* has led some scholars to associate it with the genre of the consolation,<sup>18</sup> from which, strictly speaking, *Avoiding Distress* differs in a number of respects. Firstly, it does not involve the loss of a loved one or (a less frequent subject) exile as the cause of the distress, but rather material deprivation; secondly, it is not addressed to a person who is currently mourning some loss, but to a philosophically minded enquirer seeking remedies for regaining equanimity in case of need.<sup>19</sup>

also reported by the historians Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 72.24) and Herodian (*Roman History* 1.14.2–6), again in the form of a factual reportage.

<sup>15</sup> On the date of the essay's composition, see Boudon-Millot (2007: 76), Boudon-Millot, Jouanna and Pietrobelli 2010b: LVIII–LIX, and Nutton (2013: 45–48).

<sup>16</sup> Kotzia (2012: 77–79); cf. Curtis (2014: 50–53).

<sup>17</sup> Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.7.2; cf. 2.39.20–41.25. See Brittain (2001: 277–280) and Gill (2003: 42–43). The genre of therapy of emotions pre-dates Philo and goes back at least to Chrysippus's 'therapeutic' Book 4 of his *On Passions*; on this point, see Gill (2010: 280–300) and Tieleman (2003a: 140–197).

<sup>18</sup> Mainly Boudon-Millot (2007: 75–76), who later reconsidered the generic identity of the essay, in Boudon-Millot, Jouanna and Pietrobelli 2010b: x. See also Rosen (2014: 160, n. 4) and Rothschild and Thompson (2014: 14). Traditional consolations include Cicero's *Consolation* on the death of his daughter Tullia, Seneca's *Consolation to Marcia* or *Consolation to Polybius*, Plutarch's *Consolation to his Wife* and pseudo-Plutarch's *Consolation to Apollonius*.

<sup>19</sup> See Boudon-Millot (2008a: 9) and Levy (2011: 204–205). Kaufman is right to place *Avoiding Distress* in the broader group of works that have been called 'metaconsolatory', which in essence overlap with popularised works on practical ethics; see Kaufman (2014: 275, with n. 2). Cf. Gill (2013: 341). For the distinction between the categories of works on *alypia* and *paramythia*, see Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.24.116.

What renders *Avoiding Distress* rare among mainstream works of practical ethics is that the moral instruction professed is enhanced throughout with autobiographical touches that result in a lively sort of moralising.<sup>20</sup> The therapy on offer, visualised through a very personal lens, helps consolidate Galen's authority as a moralist, because it shows that his prescriptions are based on advice that has already been tested and proved successful. On another level, the tranquillity that Galen (as narrator and author) embraces, as opposed to the expected feeling of perturbation, puts him in position to manipulate his audience's emotional responses during the process of reading, as we shall see.<sup>21</sup>

### **The construction of authority in the preface, Or how to become a moral hero**

In the preface of an epistolary tract the author traditionally mentions the motive for composing his work. The Galenic narrator (or 'Galen') starts by claiming that his correspondent's letter had requested information on the kind of training, arguments and considerations that had made Galen immune to distress. The choice of letter form helps to underline how the core message of the treatise (how to achieve immunity from distress) responds to the psychological needs of its addressee, and so exemplifies what is, in Christopher Gill's analysis, one of the salient features of ancient therapeutic writing.<sup>22</sup> Whether we see the work's form as a literary convention or indeed an element of the core strategy of the therapeutic genre in line with Gill, it also has implications for Galen's claim to expertise in practical ethics. I find it striking that, in reproducing the content of his friend's letter, 'Galen' chooses to disclose only some specific points.

According to 'Galen', the friend had himself been present and had observed (ἔωρακέναι, *Ind.* 1, 54.3 PX; cf. ἔωρακέναι, *Ind.* 1, 54.6 PX) Galen's tranquillity when the latter lost his slaves in the Antonine plague. Additionally, he had heard (ἄκηκοέναι, *Ind.* 1, 54.4 PX) that Galen had

<sup>20</sup> In that sense, autobiography in Galen has a strong moral purpose, as argued in the course of this study, and not just an epistemological function, as posited by Boudon-Millot (2009: 188).

<sup>21</sup> There are various structural outlines of the treatise; see e.g. White (2014: 223), Xenophonos (2014: 589) or Jones (2009: 390).

<sup>22</sup> Gill (2013: 352–354). The other three features being 'the conception of happiness involved', 'the psychological framework assumed' and 'advice about how to carry the therapeutic process forward', Gill (2013: 348–351). On the work's generic identification as a letter-treatise, see e.g. Rothschild and Thompson (2014: 13).

suffered from similar setbacks in the past. The narrator also tells us that his correspondent now had a clear appreciation of the losses caused by the fire (αὐτὸς ἔφη ἐπίστασθαι, *Ind.* 1, 54.9-10 PX) and that an informant had told him (πεπεύσθαι δέ τινος ἀγγέλλοντός σοι, *Ind.* 1, 54.10 PX) that Galen was not grieved but was cheerfully continuing his normal activities.

The verbal forms of observation and cognition reinforce the credibility of Galen's account. His claim to have retained his equanimity in the face of a range of distressing events is backed up by external evidence, by trusted third parties who had personally encountered him and now provided objective reports.<sup>23</sup> Galen's management of distress attracts the attention of those around him and leads to his being seen as a moral exemplar. The process whereby Galen is elevated to this status begins with the narrator's detailed enumeration of his losses, itemised in ascending order from the relatively minor to the more substantial, thus stressing the degree of deprivation. He lists many gold and silver plates, but also his drugs (both simple and compound) as well as his medical instruments; then, the editions of ancient authors he had prepared and his own compositions; finally and most importantly, a rare collection of antidotes, among which the famous 'theriac' and cinnamon which Galen possessed a very great deal of at a time when it was extremely difficult to get hold of them (*Ind.* 1, 54.11-56.24 PX).

By confronting the destruction of those treasures with imperturbability, Galen excites his correspondent's amazement (θαυμάζειν, *Ind.* 1, 54.11 PX). Amazement leading to admiration of a moral exemplum was a basic component of moral learning in the history of ethics, forming 'a responsive stage of arousal' before the 'next active stage of emulation', cognition and discernment.<sup>24</sup> In context, amazement supports Galen's claim to moral heroism and his self-projection as a paragon of magnanimity to other people. As Galen, drawing on Chrysippus (fragm. 876 *SVF*), explains in *Affected Places*, magnanimity makes its practitioners rise far above *lypē* and other fiercer passions, because their mental strength (τόνος τῆς ψυχῆς) is greater than their passions, which are insignificant (τὰ παθήματα σμικρά, *Loc. Aff.* 5.1, 288.28-290.3 Brunschön = VIII.302.2-5 K.). The same passage sets the magnanimous individual (ἄνθρωπος . . . μεγαλόψυχος) apart from other people who, by contrast, can die of *lypē* (ἔνιοι καὶ διὰ λύπην

<sup>23</sup> For the eyewitnesses' role in cementing the credibility of Galen's accounts, see Lehoux (2017).

<sup>24</sup> Langlands (2018: 94).

ἀπέθανον *Loc. Aff.* 5.1, 288.27-28 Brunschön = VIII.302.1 K.).<sup>25</sup> This brings to mind Aristotle's view that magnanimity is a virtue for the few, being an 'adornment of the virtues' (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1124a1). The distinction between people who are magnanimous and those who are not, found in *Affected Places*, seems to inform the intertext in *Avoiding Distress*, since the magnanimous Galen is here contrasted with Philides the grammarian (about whom the correspondent had also been informed, πεπύσθαι, *Ind.* 1, 56.24 PX): facing the loss of his books in the same fire, Philides subsequently died of depression,<sup>26</sup> surrounded by black-clad mourners (*Ind.* 1, 56.27-28 PX).<sup>27</sup> The death scene is juxtaposed to the joyful countenance (φαίδρον, *Ind.* 1, 54.10 PX) with which Galen withstood the distress described above and this ultimately endorses his suitability to write a treatise on cheerfulness and the treatment of distress.<sup>28</sup>

Another key issue arising from the proem concerns the role in the text of the addressee, who is meant to participate not just as a witness to the loss of Galen's material goods, but also because of his personal rapport with the narrator. By reconstructing the addressee's letter, the Galenic narrator offers a clear glimpse of how the two men share common reminiscences and explains that their epistolary communication thus advances the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Later on in the text the close relationship between the two men is reflected in the description of the social credentials of Galen's friend, which so much resemble his own: he is a fellow Pergamene, of the same age as Galen (i.e. both now in their mid sixties), they have known each other from childhood, attended school together and enjoyed the same liberal education (ἐξ ἀρχῆς

<sup>25</sup> Galen seems to accept that there are gradations of *lypē* in different people and to draw a distinction between retrospective and prospective distress, the former for events that have already taken place (e.g. the death of someone close), the latter for events that might happen in the future (e.g. political unrest), *Hipp. Progn.* 1.4, 207.5-20 Heeg = XVIII B.19.1-12 K.

<sup>26</sup> The phenomenology of *lypē* (how the passion is experienced) is telling here, since Galen's description includes the participle συντακεῖς (literally 'he melted away') as an apt correlate to the fire. LSJ s.v. συντήκω A.II.2, with Plato, *Timaeus* 83b; also in *Comp. Med. Gen.* 2.1, XIII.459.4-5 K. Galen's choice of the term συντακεῖς in *Avoiding Distress* is also in line with the naturalistic effects of *lypē* as explained in his medical accounts. Σύνηξις (colliquescence) refers to loss of weight due to *lypē* in *Prolaps.* 1.29, XVIII A.362.11-364.2 K. On the experience of grief in Galen, see King (2013) and Mattern (2016).

<sup>27</sup> The name of the grammarian is dubious. *Vlatadon* reads Philides, BM corrected to Philippides, Nutton in his English translation of the work in Singer (2013: 79) suggested Philistides, whereas Kotzia emended to Kallistos, following Pfaff's reconstruction of the name from the Arabic in a close parallel in Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Epidemics VI'*, 486.19-24 WP. None of these names can be supported by the secondary tradition. In PX we have therefore adopted the reading of the manuscript.

<sup>28</sup> Fitzgerald (2014) explores the physiognomic aspects of Galen's cheerful disposition in *Avoiding Distress*.

συναναστραφείς καὶ συμπαίδευθεῖς, *Ind.* 12, 78.2-3 PX; σὺ παιδευθεῖς σὺν ἡμῖν, *Ind.* 13, 80.5 PX). Having spent some time in Rome, the friend embraces Galen's political perspective on Commodus's politics (*Ind.* 12, 78.16-80.20 PX) and, although they now live miles apart, they have maintained a close friendship for many years.<sup>29</sup> Therefore Galen's personal misfortune is expected to be a familiar matter to the addressee, making its recollection and the quest for ethical equilibrium also something that concerns both of them. Galen is not a distant, bookish preacher, but an intimate and pragmatic moral advisor.

The deliberate introduction of personality into the narrative might be explained in the light of Galen's moral programme in his *Character Traits*: the aim of the virtuous person is to reform his own soul in order to reform the souls of all the other people over whom he has influence, one by one, beginning with those closest to him. This he will achieve by teaching them by precept what they ought to do and by making himself a role-model for them (*De Mor.* 39 Kr.). This pattern of Galenic moral reform coincides with Michel Foucault's view of how the care of the Self grounded in psychosomatic well-being can become a means of helping the Other, and how a preoccupation with the particularity of the Other facilitates moral treatment and progression. In *Avoiding Distress*, the care of the Self is elucidated through Galen's autobiographical introspection, and the particularity of the Other explained by the addressee's long-standing acquaintance and emotional relationship with the author. As Foucault further stresses, works of the Principate that are primarily concerned with the interplay between the care of the Self and helping the Other build on 'pre-existing relations' between author and reader and cause an 'intensification of existing social relations',<sup>30</sup> ideas that are completely in line with Galen's understanding of the moralising power of friendship in *Avoiding Distress*.

On another level, Galen's self-presentation as an ethical authority in the tract resembles his self-projection in his medical case histories. Those embedded clinical encounters do far more than just explore the stages of the diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of the diseases of particular patients (on which more in [Chapters 7](#) and [8](#)). They attest to Galen's superiority as a physician, reanimating through auto-recollection the reactions of his peers to his medical performances.<sup>31</sup> The most common response was

<sup>29</sup> See *Thras.* 1, 33.1-7 Helmreich = V.806.4-9 K. on Galen's similar closeness to his addressee. On the role of friendship in philosophical spiritual guidance, see Hadot (1986: 449-450).

<sup>30</sup> Foucault (1990b: 53).

<sup>31</sup> Mainly Mattern (2008a), García Ballester (1995); cf. Álvarez-Millán (1999: 30-33).

amazement.<sup>32</sup> In one of Galen's most fascinating texts, *Prognosis*, the Peripatetic philosopher Eudemus admires Galen and advertises his medical competence to high-ranking figures in Rome,<sup>33</sup> while elsewhere Galen attracts admiration of the Imperial circle by curing the young emperor.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Galen's medical efficacy is backed up by the addressee's own confirmation of the former's claims (the frequent aside 'as you very well know'),<sup>35</sup> as someone who has been constantly present during the performances. Finally, although the author is portrayed as an exceptional physician, he is never isolated from his social circle, which includes a range of teachers, patients and physicians. The communal experiences he shares with his addressee, Epigenes, in particular and the direct interaction between the two expressed in the use of the sociative 'we', make Galen's medical narration a social rather than a private act.<sup>36</sup> A similar collaborative approach informs *Avoiding Distress*, suggesting that in transmitting his personal ethical assertions, Galen is not alone, but at the very heart of his surroundings, a philosopher embedded in society. I will return to this point below.

When Galen was composing his *Avoiding Distress*, essays on psychic tranquillity were already in circulation, for instance, by Democritus and Panaetius (now lost), and by Seneca and Plutarch. More specifically, Plutarch's preface to his own *Tranquillity of the Soul* offers a good *comparandum* regarding the construction of authority and the relation between author and addressee in such moral contexts. This is an epistolary essay too, which Plutarch addresses to his Roman friend Paccius in response to the latter's request for a treatise on emotional resilience. In this case, Plutarch bases his ethical potential not on his moral experiences,<sup>37</sup> like Galen, but on the philosophical material he is able to elaborate in written form: a work of practical ethics after direct consultation of his personal note-books (*hypomnēmata*) on the one hand<sup>38</sup> and an exegetical

<sup>32</sup> On *thaumazein* in case histories in relation to praise, see Mattern (2008a: 80–83). On the performative aspect of Galen's anatomical demonstrations, see Gleason (2009: 85–114); cf. Debru (1995).

<sup>33</sup> *Praen.* 2, 80.22–25 N. = XIV.612.9–12 K.

<sup>34</sup> *Praen.* 11, 126.26–128.32 N. = XIV.657.12–660.16 K.      <sup>35</sup> *Praen.* 2, 74.15 N. = XIV.605.17 K.

<sup>36</sup> On the notion of 'communality' in Galen, see König (2011: 183–186). The term 'sociative' was coined by Sloty (1928). See Asper (2005) for Galen's use of other grammatical constructions (e.g. the *integratives Wir* or the *anthropologisches Wir*) and rhetorical devices, such as the *Appellstruktur* designed to build a rapport with his reader and establish his authority. Cf. Mattern (2008a: 138–140).

<sup>37</sup> The same can be said to some extent of Seneca, on which see Bertsch (2015) and Edwards (1997).

<sup>38</sup> On *hypomnēmata* in Plutarch, see Xenophontos (2012) with additional references. On Galen's *hypomnēmata*, see Pietrobelli (2018: 85–92).

commentary elucidating some thorny passages from Plato's *Timaeus* on the other (*De Tranq. Anim.* 464 E-F). In the rest of the essay, Plutarch is lecturing, seeking to mould his addressee's behaviour. For instance, he praises Paccius for not succumbing to the evils of fame, and prizing social standing (*De Tranq. Anim.* 465A) and elsewhere castigates him on suspicion of self-interest and overindulgence (*De Tranq. Anim.* 468E). As a character in the narrative Paccius gradually fades away and becomes a constructed substitute for a larger audience enjoying Plutarch's moral advice. That is not quite the case with Galen's anonymous friend, who is cast as being closely attached to the author throughout the narrative in such a way that the plot makes sense as long as the anonymous friend remains an essential part of what we read. That Paccius's role is not as vital as that of Galen's friend might also be seen in the fact that Plutarch's essay is not context-specific, in the fashion of *Avoiding Distress*, but concerned with a large number of situations that could generate distress.

In Seneca's *On the Tranquillity of the Soul* the author is also depicted as a qualified philosophical teacher, who provides his addressee, Annaeus Serenus, with a sequence of precepts to be adopted.<sup>39</sup> Epictetus is a similar case in point, since his *Discourses* and *Manual* (as preserved by his pupil Arrian) communicate to his fragile young students his ethical lessons through imperatives and hortatory subjunctives.<sup>40</sup> This aligns Epictetus's didactic style with Maximus of Tyre's exhortatory perspective that 'the summit of philosophy and the road that leads to it demand a teacher who can rouse young men's souls and guide their ambitions' (*Oration* 1.8). Of course, the authoritative pedagogy practised by these philosophers does not resemble Epicurus's coercive therapy.<sup>41</sup> But it is nevertheless in stark contrast to the intrinsically co-operative relationship between author and addressee in *Avoiding Distress* that underlies the therapy of distress, in line with the message of the two poetic quotes opening this Chapter.

### The revived reality of the loss

We have seen in the [previous section](#) that 'Galen' refers to Philides the grammarian, who died of distress at the loss of his books. Apart from functioning as an example to be avoided, this incident helps to reperform

<sup>39</sup> Hine (2017) explores the issue of philosophical authority in Seneca.

<sup>40</sup> Long (2002: 43–44), though of course this is often lost in the summaries in the *Manual* (*Encheiridion*). See also Long (2002: 52–66) on Epictetus's styles of discourse.

<sup>41</sup> Nussbaum (1986); cf. Mitsis (1993) with reference to didactic coercion in Lucretius.



the public response to the fire. ‘Galen’ reports that most people stored their possessions in the Temple of Peace, having complete confidence (expressed with the recurrent cognates of *θαρρεῖν*, *Ind.* 1, 56.28 PX, 1, 56.30 PX; 1, 58.35 PX) that the repositories were fireproof. The tragic overturning of their expectations gives rise to their disappointment, to which Galen did not subscribe.

In a new section he stresses that, apart from the general disaster, Galen alone had suffered a personal misfortune (*ἴδιον*, *Ind.* 1, 58.36 PX) that was all the more discomfiting: as he was about to visit his estate in Campania, he had decided to store all his valuables in the repositories to keep them safe, but instead he found that everything had been destroyed. Even so he was not upset even for a moment, and this purportedly motivated the addressee to request a first-hand account of the event from Galen, although he had already learnt about it through witnesses, as noted above. By virtue of his emotional aloofness from common reactions and his addressee’s acknowledgment of his exceptionality, Galen gives his reader a sense of security; and, as the narrative progresses, he reconstructs a blow-by-blow description of the loss (more extensive and systematic than the one we have seen in the preface), meant to incite a feeling of retrospective distress in the reader. The author reforms his addressee’s behaviour by assigning him specific thoughts and corresponding emotional reactions. These manipulative strategies take the form of asides in the second-person singular and are akin to what we nowadays call the power of ‘suggestion’, a term coined by nineteenth-century psychologists such as William James.<sup>42</sup>

The asides start to appear at the juncture where we pass from the past tense, in which the correspondent’s epistle was reported, to the present tense, in which ‘Galen’ now focuses on the after-effects of the loss. He plainly says that even today he can feel the loss of all those things that were essential to his practice every time he needed a book, instrument or drug (*μέχρι νῦν αἰσθάνομαι καθ’ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν*, *Ind.* 2, 58.7-8 PX); and directly ‘suggests’ a first thought to his friend: ‘But in fact the most dreadful matter (*δεινότατον*) associated with the loss of the books has escaped you (*λέληθέ σε*), and there is no hope (*μηδὲ ἐλπίδα*) of recovery remaining, since all libraries on the Palatine were burned to the ground on that day’ (*Ind.* 2, 58.9-11 PX). In the reproduction of the friend’s letter,

<sup>42</sup> On how suggestions can influence our cognition and behaviour, see the study by Michael, Garry and Kirsch (2012) with additional references; also Caner (1954). On the practical application of suggestion in the medical sphere, including constructed statements that promote suggestion, see Bernheim (1888, repr. 1985), Sidis (1973). Rosen (2014: 165) has construed Galen’s strategy in the light of modern transference theory.

'Galen' allowed some hope for the recovery of his medical instruments, although he was clear that this would take a significant amount of time and effort (*Ind.* 1, 56.18-19 PX), whereas in this case the elimination of any hope transposes a sense of retrospective despair to the addressee:

It is accordingly impossible to find not only works that are rare or unavailable from another source, but also the common ones that were eagerly sought out for the precision of their text, those of Callinus, Atticus, Peducaeus and of course Aristarchus, by whom are the two Homers, and also the Plato of Panaetius and many other such writings . . . For in fact autograph copies of many ancient grammarians, orators, physicians and philosophers were stored there.<sup>43</sup> *Ind.* 2, 58.11-60.18 PX

The valuable legacy to posterity has been burned to ashes, but Galen's narration becomes even more powerful when he claims that, in addition to the numerous books, he lost that day his own recent editions, which were so carefully arranged that 'not even a single or double marginal mark or a coronis suitably placed between books' (*Ind.* 3, 60.3-6 PX) had been destroyed. In that category belonged the works of iconic figures of Graeco-Roman philosophy and medicine (*Ind.* 3, 60.8-62.10 PX). The emphasis on the diligent and time-consuming textual preparation of important works augments the emotional impact of the loss.

The same pattern recurs later in the text; a reference to a group of perished intellectual treasures is accompanied by two manipulative asides, which now stir up not the idea but the emotion of distress itself: 'Above all, however, you will be distressed by the fact that, (Λυπήσει δέ σε καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα) beyond the books recorded in the so-called Catalogues, I found some in the Palatine libraries . . .' (*Ind.* 3, 62.10-12 PX), by which Galen means that he had come across rare works of limited circulation that had also now disappeared for ever. In similar fashion: 'Perhaps you were also distressed (Ἰσως δὲ ἐλύπει) by the unfortunate outcome of my treatise on Attic nouns and collections of everyday language', a work comprising two parts, one drawn from old comedy and the other from prose-writers (*Ind.* 5, 64.1-3 PX).

<sup>43</sup> Οὔτε οὖν ὅσα σπάνια καὶ ἀλλαχόθι μηδαμόθεν κείμενα δυνατὸν ἔστιν εὑρεῖν [ἔστιν], οὔτε τῶν μέσων, διὰ δὲ τὴν τῆς γραφῆς ἀκριβείαν ἐσπουδασμένων, Καλλίνεια καὶ Ἀττικαία [μέν] καὶ Πεδοικίνεια, καὶ μὴν Ἀριστάρχεια, οὐτίνος εἰσιν Ὅμηροι δύο, καὶ Πλάτων ὁ Παναητίου καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τοιαῦτα . . . Καὶ γὰρ γραμματικῶν πολλῶν αὐτόγραφα βιβλία τῶν παλαιῶν ἔκειντο καὶ ῥητόρων καὶ ἱατρῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων. Square brackets indicate deletions by the editors, whereas angle brackets enclose letters or words added by the editors.

In order to increase the reader's anxiety with variations on a theme, Galen now adduces the role of fate (*tyche*), a traditional topic in ethical works of the post-Hellenistic period, which is also addressed in his *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* (*Protr.* 2-4, 85-88 B. = I.3-6 K.), as we will see in the [next Chapter](#). Fate is a *media vox*, sometimes known for its benevolence and at others for the unexpected blows that plague human life, hence showing the need for philosophical instruction as a protective medium. Galen, so he tells us, had made copies of all his works intended for distribution, but had by chance (κατὰ τύχην, *Ind.* 5, 64.3 PX; cf. κατὰ τὴν τύχην, *Ind.* 7, 68.3 PX) only transposed to Campania his work on prose-writers, which was saved. His remark that the same fate that had favoured him also ambushed him (ἐνῆδρευσεν οὖν ἡμᾶς ἡ Τύχη, *Ind.* 5, 66.14-15 PX) brings us one step closer to the emotional climax and leads Galen to linger on the loss of his study of the vocabulary of old comedy, explaining the significance of which takes him no less than two whole paragraphs (*Ind.* 6, 66.1-7, 68.5 PX).

In contrast to the feeling of distress with which the addressee is now afflicted, 'Galen', describing his own emotional state, reiterates that none of these losses had grieved him (Τούτων οὖν οὐδὲν ἠνίασέ με, *Ind.* 7, 68.5 PX; ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἐλύπησεν, *Ind.* 7, 68.10 PX), although they were substantial and hard to replace, not even the destruction of his *hypomnēmata* and a large number of medical and philosophical works. The affective gap between the two parties produces a state of complete amazement in both the primary and the secondary audience: 'What on earth, you will say; is even greater than all the items mentioned that could cause distress? Well, I shall tell you what this is.' (*Ind.* 8, 68.1-2 PX).<sup>44</sup> Galen was convinced that he possessed the most remarkable drug recipes in the Roman world, brought to him by a twofold fate (Διττή . . . τύχη, *Ind.* 8, 68.5 PX). His rhetorical question, however, and more especially his assertive 'I will tell you' at the end of the quote, are misleading, as we do not, in fact, get any answer as to whether the loss of his drug collections upset him or not. Instead, Galen redirects the questions ascribed to his addressee, who no longer cares which of the many disasters would have aroused the most distress in Galen (obviously none of them!), but only why he was not grieved like other men at the loss of such a great variety of possessions (*Ind.* 9, 72.5-8 PX). Therefore, *prima facie*, Galen's moral heroism in the rhetorical question quoted above borders on self-praise,

<sup>44</sup> Τί ποτε οὖν, φήσεις, ἔτι μείζον ἀπάντων τῶν εἰρημένων ἐστίν, ὃ λυπεῖν <ἂν> δύναιτο; Καὶ δὴ σοὶ φράσω τοῦτο.

but on closer inspection it actually emphasises his emotional resilience, so that it acts as a therapeutic strategy in the interests of his reader's moral progress. The text is by itself a suggestive entity, conveying to the reader the idea that the authorial self is a unique role model among his contemporaries, whereas the reader will himself become one of those 'Others' troubled by distress unless he follows Galen's lead. Galen, as a soul doctor, has helped the reader develop an introspective consciousness of his own psychic frailty and shown him, as a critical entity, his pressing need for therapy.

### Traditional instruction and Galen's ethics

In a new section of the essay, Galen exploits the repertory of moral instruction familiar from the works of other moralists. One notices, for instance, the use of moral anecdotes and quotations from authorities, to which Galen adds individual twists. His place in the legacy of *moralia* is confirmed by the reminder he puts in the mouth of his addressee that the latter has heard him expounding similar ethical pronouncements many times in the past (*Ind.* 9, 72.9-11 PX).<sup>45</sup>

The moralising part starts with Aristippus of Cyrene, an important follower of Socrates, who became proverbially known in works of ethics for his self-gratification. Aristippus also appears in Plutarch's *Tranquillity of the Soul* 469C-D, where he is an example of a wise man rising above the unpleasant conditions of life.<sup>46</sup> In contrast to Plutarch, Galen recounts two anecdotes about Aristippus that point to the importance of self-sufficiency and hence to the idea that the loss of wealth should not be a matter for sorrow. Furthermore, Galen intertwines the moral of the anecdote about Aristippus with his own ethical voice, when he declares that he shares Aristippus's point of view:

[H]e (i.e. Aristippus) nicely demonstrates what you heard me say many times, namely that one should not focus on anything that has been lost, but rather consider how those who have inherited three fields from their father will not bear to look at others with thirty.<sup>47</sup> *Ind.* 10, 74.11-15 PX

<sup>45</sup> A frequent course of action in Galen. Remember *Comp. Med. Loc.* XIII. 8.1, 116.1-117.5 K. discussed in [Chapter 1](#). See also the preface of *Affections and Errors of the Soul* analysed at the start of [Chapter 6](#).

<sup>46</sup> Also in Galen's *Protr.* 5, 90 B. = I.8-9 K.

<sup>47</sup> πάνυ καλῶς ἐνδεικνύμενος ὁ πολλακίς ἠκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ λεγόμενον, ὡς οὐ χρῆ πρός τι τῶν ἀπολλυμένων ἐμβλέπειν ἀλλὰ λογίζεσθαι πῶς οἱ τρεῖς ἀγροῦς δεξάμενοι τοῦ πατρὸς [οὐκ ἀνέξοντο] βλέπειν οὐκ ἀνέξονται ἑτέρους ἔχοντας τριάκοντα.

Galen offers mind-control techniques that secure happiness: i.e. that we should refrain from having too many desires which can hardly ever be satisfied, and should be content with what is sufficient to life, both stances akin to what we call ‘attitude of gratitude’ in modern psychology<sup>48</sup> and which go as far back as Epicurus.<sup>49</sup> Galen’s advice becomes more appealing when he provides moral evaluation of what is considered ethically admirable (*Ind.* 10, 74.25 PX).<sup>50</sup> To his mind, the magnanimous person is not the one who is not distressed at being left with three fields, but the person who is destitute and still bears his poverty without distress, such as Crates, Diogenes and especially Zeno, who also represents a model of self-sufficiency in Plutarch’s account (*De Tranq. Anim.* 467C-D).<sup>51</sup>

Galen has so far employed commonplaces to present his moralising in a protreptic fashion, but again a personal note creeps into the discussion. He explains in two instances<sup>52</sup> that it was not such a great thing for him to despise the loss of his possessions, because he was always left with much more than he needed. By the same token, it was not important that he had not prized his position in the Imperial court (*Ind.* 11, 76.11-14 PX), or that he had lost all his drugs, books and recipes, and the writings on them he had prepared for publication along with many other treatises (*Ind.* 11, 76.14-19 PX). The recapitulation of his losses in reverse order here is not simply a textual reminder, but an ethical strategy with more complex connotations. We have seen in a [previous section](#) that, on his return to Rome, Galen came to realise every day the importance of the loss and found himself in need of particular books, instruments or drugs. All these things he now considers superfluous, judging by his particular use of the participle καταφρονήσαντι (‘having despised’) echoing the Stoic belief in ‘indifferents’:<sup>53</sup> the only thing that determines happiness is virtue, and everything else, including wealth, health, fame and social prominence, are moral indifferents, factors that cannot affect individual happiness.<sup>54</sup>

Galen’s philosophical spirit is practical rather than theoretical, especially in instances such as these in which he speaks as a social critic, aiming at correcting the deviant morals of those around him. Second-century

<sup>48</sup> For example, Wood, Joseph and Linley (2007). <sup>49</sup> DeWitt (1937). Cf. Tsouna (2009).

<sup>50</sup> For Plato and Aristotle, ‘noble’ as a contrast to ‘malicious’ was one of the criteria for approving or disapproving of an ethical action: *Republic* 363e-364a, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104b32.

<sup>51</sup> Also in Plutarch’s *On How to Benefit from your Enemies* 87A, *On the Tranquillity of the Soul* 467C-D and *On Exile* 603D, in Seneca’s *On Tranquillity of the Soul* and in Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.5.

<sup>52</sup> *Ind.* 11, 76.1 PX and *Ind.* 11, 76.11-12 PX. <sup>53</sup> Brennan (2003: 269–274).

<sup>54</sup> See Cicero’s formulation of *rerum externarum despicentia* attributed to Panaetius in *On Duties* 1.66.

Graeco-Roman society is often seen – and was seen at the time – as a profoundly competitive one, in which personal elevation became an end in itself, very often ignoring the weight of morality. In the introduction to his *Prognosis*, the two proems to the *Therapeutic Method* and his *Recognising the Best Physician*, all of which to some extent take the form of ethical diatribes,<sup>55</sup> as we shall see in other parts of this book, Galen comments on the degeneracy of his times and criticises in particular the corruption that afflicted physicians in Rome.<sup>56</sup> He frequently expresses his desire to abandon the capital and move back to his native town, which he paints in a more positive light. The distinction he makes between Rome and the Greek East is symptomatic of Galen's pride in being a Hellene, a topical issue in Second Sophistic discourse, especially when it came to the responses of Greek intellectuals to Roman rule.<sup>57</sup> We will see below that Galen criticises Commodus's rule, whereas we have already observed that Galen's correspondent in this case is a fellow Pergamene and not a Roman dignitary, like Plutarch's Paccius. That said, the moral dimension of geographical space in Galen is also critical, as I will argue in [Chapter 8](#).

Now, it is important to note that in Galen's public debate in *Avoiding Distress*, designed to advise contemporary readers, he borrows convenient terms or adopts individual tenets and strategies from Stoicism (despite his general hostility to Stoic psychology),<sup>58</sup> because this was considered a very fully worked out kind of philosophy, a way of life, and hence one that suited his pragmatic spirit. Galen, for instance, suggests a method of preparing for future evils (*praemeditatio futurorum malorum*), one of the fundamentals of Stoic psychotherapy and shared with the Cyrenaics,

<sup>55</sup> The term "diatribe" is nowadays conventionally used to refer to a rhetorical form of moral teaching and exhortation, although it does not designate anything that was recognised in antiquity as a distinct form or kind. Instead, the word διὰτριβή in ancient literature was used to denote either a lecture or an account of a philosopher's informal interactions with his students. I am grateful to Michael Trapp for this clarification. See also Fuentes González (1998: 44–55).

<sup>56</sup> Galen's phrase 'I knew nothing of these things on my first stay in Rome' with reference to rivalries and vices in *Praen.* 2, 74.12–13 N. = XIV.605.13–15 K. suggests that he considered Pergamum a morally superior place. On the corruption of the medical profession, see for instance, *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 41.1–47.14 I. with Chapter 7.

<sup>57</sup> Seminal discussions include: Anderson (1993), Swain (1996), Goldhill (2001), Whitmarsh (2001). On Galen's complex relation to the Second Sophistic, see von Staden (1997b). On the contrast between Rome and Pergamum in Galen, see Boudon-Millot (2008b: 71–74).

<sup>58</sup> See Gill (2007), who advances the interesting argument that Galen's polemic against a thesis or doctrinal group does not amount to a strong opposition to it, but rather acts as an 'intellectual foil' that enables him to define his own approach. Gill also stresses that Galen's demarcation of intellectual friends and enemies is fuzzy in so far as he 'constructs shifting patterns of intellectual alliance and hostility according to the specific thesis maintained in each treatise', Gill (2007: 92). Cf. Levy (2011).

according to which the anticipation of traumatic experiences might lead to an increased ability to endure them when they happened.<sup>59</sup> Although this meditative practice seems to be a point of contention among philosophers – Epicurus, for example, claimed that distress is either bearable or short and that we should thus not aggravate it by focusing on its imagined visualisation<sup>60</sup> – Galen is openly in favour of it (*Ind.* 12, 78.8–13 PX).<sup>61</sup> Again the moralising is not simply thrown at the addressee as an injunction to adopt without further consideration, but it becomes a vital element in their common experiences. The addressee is actively involved in the narrative when ‘Galen’ reminds him of the crimes committed by Commodus and how his political fears had schooled Galen’s imagination (ἐγύμνασά μου τὰς φαντασίας, *Ind.* 12, 80.20 PX) and prepared him for the total loss of all his possessions. The notion of φαντασία again goes back to the Stoics, generally referring to the impressions that are created in the mind when the senses are stimulated by external phenomena. Thus ‘Galen’ advises his friend to practise using his own imagination too (ἄσκειν παρακελεύομαι τὰς φαντασίας σου τῆς ψυχῆς, *Ind.* 13, 80.2 PX) by anticipating being confronted with the possibility of exile, a common threat during the reign of Commodus. Here Galen is certainly addressing a larger group of people too, who must have been aware of the capricious politics of the Roman emperor, and giving them practical ethical means to withstand the possible dangers deriving from his oppression.

The practical tone of Galen’s ethics is not the product of Stoic influences or social commentary alone, but also of his personal experience. Around the end of the essay, ‘Galen’ raises a central issue in ancient ethics when he claims that his training of the imagination was based on a combination of proper natural propensities and excellent education (*Ind.* 13, 80.3–5 PX). This gives him the opportunity to discuss the contribution of his father to his ethical upbringing, a topic of which Galen is very fond.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See, for instance, Armisen-Marchetti (2008). Studies on the techniques of ancient meditation include Rabbow (1954), Hadot (1969) and Hadot (1981). On the history of meditation in Imperial-period Stoicism, see Newman (1989). For a brief history of psychotherapy in antiquity, see White, McGeachan, Miller and Xenophontos (2020: 730–733).

<sup>60</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 7.33 and 7.64 respectively.

<sup>61</sup> In an unknown Euripidean play (fragm. 964; Kannicht, *TGF* vol. 5, p. 963); Theseus is the speaker: ‘as I once learned from a wise man, | I fell to considering disasters constantly, | imagining for myself exile from my native land, | and untimely deaths and many other misfortunes, | so that if I ever suffer anything of what I was imagining | it will not be unexpected and will not tear my soul apart’. Cf. Galen, *PHP* 4.7, 282.17–23 DL = V.418.8–13 K.

<sup>62</sup> For example, in his *MM* 8.3, X.560–561 K.

Galen's moral enterprise was indebted to the Platonic and Aristotelian educational model, which maintained that human character was shaped by the right mixture of nature (*physis*) and training (*askēsis*).<sup>63</sup> Although in the passage we have just seen he presents both aspects as informing his own education (also *Ind.* 14, 82.1-2 PX), in referring to his father he makes clear that he was a man naturally endowed with qualities of character without having been exposed to the influence of philosophers (*Ind.* 13, 80.8-82.3 PX). Galen's position on *physis* is a complex one, because he uses it with semantic flexibility across a variety of texts. For instance, in his *Character Traits* he talks about features of character that appear in infants as soon as they are born, and, correspondingly, states that anger and revenge are inherited, not learned, traits in man.<sup>64</sup> *Physis* seems somewhat less important in the *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* (see [Chapter 5](#)) and more especially in *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, where nature together with early education and the application of reason represent the educational triad that made Galen immune to distress,<sup>65</sup> whereas in *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* training trumps nature.<sup>66</sup> In *Avoiding Distress*, the triad excludes *physis* altogether and replaces it with rational arguments instead (*Ind.* 1, 54.1-2 PX). The reshaping of the same notion is to be explained in the light of each disquisition and its purpose(s) in each case.

To be more specific, Galen devotes a separate section of the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* to narrating the case of a young man in his close circle, who was surprised that Galen was not vulnerable to great disasters, whilst he himself was distraught even at trivial ones. When he sought an explanation for this, Galen told him that 'nature has great power in childhood, so too does emulation of those amongst whom one lives, then at a later stage the important factors are doctrines and training' (*Aff. Pegg. Dig.* 7, 25.21-24 DB = V.37.12-14 K.).<sup>67</sup> Textual evidence suggests that this essay is indeed addressed to a young man whose philosophical education is still at an elementary level, as will be argued in more detail in [Chapter 6](#). For instance, he needs a moral supervisor to criticise his

<sup>63</sup> On *physis* in Galen, see Jouanna (2003) and Kovačič (2001); on *physis* in Galen's psychology in particular, see Kovačič (2001: 151-194).

<sup>64</sup> *De Mor.* 29 Kr. <sup>65</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 25.20-21 DB = V.37.10-11 K. See also Gill (2013: 355).

<sup>66</sup> *PHP* 9.2, 550.8-31 DL = V.732.13-734.10 K.

<sup>67</sup> καὶ γὰρ καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐν ἅπασιν ἔφην [εἶ] δύνασθαι μέγα ἐν τῇ τῶν παιδίων ἡλικίᾳ <καὶ τὴν> τοῖς συζῶσιν ὁμοίωσιν, εἶθ' ὕστερον τὰ τε δόγματα καὶ τὴν ἀσκησιν.



conduct (*Aff. Pegg. Dig.* 10, 36.16-17 DB = V.55.4-6 K.)<sup>68</sup> and there is an emphasis on the moral failings to which young people were especially attracted (*Aff. Pegg. Dig.* 26, 12-14 DB = 38.11-15 K.),<sup>69</sup> both ideas absent from *Avoiding Distress*. Therefore, the omission of *physis* as a determinant of psychic harmony at the beginning of *Avoiding Distress* is well adapted to the advanced philosophical stage of his addressee, who was expected to be indifferent to something that would affect someone in the initial stages of their training. On the other hand, the focus on the untutored nature of Galen's father would have no place in an essay meant to teach young men the prime importance of correct training. The insertion of *physis* in the context of *Avoiding Distress* reflects Galen's philosophical perceptiveness, because it is characteristic of Platonic-Aristotelian educational thinking on ethical development from which he drew inspiration, but not the Stoic approach, according to which early influences and instruction alone shape one's moral character.<sup>70</sup> It is obvious that Galen's eclectic subscription to different philosophical schools serves the aims of his practical ethics. That puts him in the same camp as Plutarch, who also opted for philosophical eclecticism<sup>71</sup> in the context of his moral project, rather than devoting himself to strict adherence to one philosophical ideology, as Epictetus, Seneca or Musonius Rufus had done.

A further caveat should be given about the relationship between Galen and his father. In Galen's case his father's role in the formation of his character is not exploited in the text as a philosophical *topos*, as in the writings of many other ancient thinkers.<sup>72</sup> Rather, it is an issue informed again by the practical experience he had gained from his own social reality, as can be seen, for example, from his allusion to the great contrast between the evil son Commodus and his philosopher father Marcus Aurelius, a relationship he had witnessed at first hand.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Note that in his medical work *The Best Method of Teaching* Galen once again recommends the presence of a teacher supervisor, whose aim is to correct the mistakes that arise from the natural deficiencies of the young student.

<sup>69</sup> In the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* Galen discusses another cause of distress beside material losses, i.e. the one that comes from a sense of shame, a feeling to which young people are especially prone. Again Galen plays with the social expectations of his addressees, as Graeco-Roman society was predominantly a society of *aidōs*.

<sup>70</sup> An opinion developed by Cleanthes (Stobaeus, *Eclogues* 2.65.8-9), probably in his *On Excellence of Natural Endowment* (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.175) and by Chrysippus (Plutarch, *On Common Notions Against the Stoics* 1069E).

<sup>71</sup> van Hoof (2010) and van Hoof (2014).

<sup>72</sup> The Stoics, for instance, held that the relationship between the parent and the child was 'a central paradigm of human sociability and of the desire to express virtue in action', Gill (2003: 46).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Zonta (1995: 48-49), fragm. 15-16.

Galen's way of treating the issue of the therapy of distress in the two accounts casts fresh light on his credentials as a moral writer, so I want to spend a while comparing them. 'Galen' describes how his father's indifference to worldly pleasures (*Ind.* 14, 82.3-18 PX) set an example that led him to scorn fame, wealth and social standing (*Ind.* 15, 82.1-3 PX). In the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* Galen's father is again depicted as a model for him by means of a polarised opposition between him and Galen's wicked mother.<sup>74</sup> It is interesting, however, that in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* Galen's father is shown teaching him, among other things, the avoidance of distress, though Galen refrains from mentioning this in the corresponding part of the *Avoiding Distress*, where it would have fitted in well:

I had always recalled the counsel that my father gave me: that one should not be distressed by any material loss provided that what remains is adequate for the care of one's body. This he laid down as the primary aim of possessions: to keep one from hunger, cold or thirst. If one happens to have more than is necessary for these purposes, one should, he believed, use it for good works. I have, indeed, up to now had access to sufficient resources to bestow in this way, too.<sup>75</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 30.10-16 DB = V.44.10-45.1 K.

The results of the training received from his father during his formative years as described in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* have been internalised by Galen and he now passes it on as a mature philosophical authority in his *Avoiding Distress*. The link between the two essays testifies to Galen's consistent train of moral thought; and the variations he makes, according to the requirements of each text, indicate the creativity with which he remodels the impact of emotions. In his proem to the second part of the *Therapeutic Method*, a technical work addressed to an experienced doctor, one Eugenianus, Galen admits that he had been distressed for a long time, so that he had been unable to touch a book.<sup>76</sup> Although this remark is at odds with his suggested calmness in his ethical works, it is noteworthy that Galen makes no claims to being an exemplum of moral

<sup>74</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 27.22-28.8 DB = V.40.15-41.9 K. More on that in [Chapter 6](#).

<sup>75</sup> μεμνημένον ὡν ὁ πατήρ ὑπέθετο, μὴ πρότερον ἐπὶ χρημάτων ἀπωλεία λυπηθῆναι συμβουλευόντων, ἄχρις <μῆ> ἂν ἦ τὰ λειπόμενα πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτάρκη. τοῦτον γὰρ ἐτίθετο πρῶτον ὄρον ἐκεῖνος κτημάτων, ὡς μὴ πεινῆν, μὴ βιγοῦν, μὴ διψῆν. εἰ δὲ πλείω τῆς εἰς ταῦτα χρείας εἶη, καὶ πρὸς τὰς καλὰς πράξεις, ἔφη, χρηστέον αὐτοῖς. ἐμοὶ τοίνυν ἄκρι δεῦρο τοσαύτη χρημάτων κτήσις ἐστίν, ὡς καὶ πρὸς τὰς τοιαύτας πράξεις ἔξαρκεῖν.

<sup>76</sup> Galen, *MM* 7.1, X.457.8-10 K.

reflection in the *Therapeutic Method*. His distress in the prefatory passage to the second part of this work could be a rhetorical explanation for the twenty-year gap between the composition of the first section of the work (Books 1–6) and the second (Books 7–14).

The reference to Galen's repeated recollection (μεμνημένον) of his father's counsel at the start of the passage above also merits attention for its salience in the process of moral pedagogy. Just as in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, in *Avoiding Distress* too Galen emphasises how remembering his father's image makes him feel his soul is the better for it (ἀναμνησκόμενος ἐκάστοτε, βελτίων ἑμαυτοῦ τὴν ψυχὴν αἰσθάνομαι γινόμενος, *Ind.* 13, 80.6–7 PX). The notion of recollection (ἀνάμνησις) is critical in Imperial-period moral philosophical works.<sup>77</sup> In a passage in his *Table Talk* Plutarch appropriated the Platonic notion of recollection when he states that remembering (ἀναμνήσεις) very often has the same effect as learning does.<sup>78</sup> Galen is writing in the same spirit when he says elsewhere that recollecting people with moral vices makes one a complete entity,<sup>79</sup> generating moral progress. Moral anamnesis in Galen is therefore much more important to his apparatus of ethical modification than Ricardo Julião seems to have allowed.<sup>80</sup> On another level however, one wonders whether Galen's focus on the concept of remembering may also have medical origins or links, rather than purely philosophical ones, given that in his *Matters of Health* remembering is part and parcel of successful bodily therapy as it is elsewhere, requiring the physician to recall every single day the diagnosis he had given on the previous day.<sup>81</sup> The recurrence of cognates of anamnesis in this context helps Galen make the point that the act of remembering the patient's somatic condition will expose the fault in his body and determine the appropriate treatment.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>77</sup> The notion figures prominently above all in Plato, where it has a more theoretical baggage. It denotes the retrieval of knowledge unconsciously familiar to the individual, which needs to be shaped through Socratic dialectics in order to engender philosophical truth and virtue; e.g. Plato, *Meno* 81c–85d.

<sup>78</sup> Plutarch, *Quaest. Conv.* 629E; cf. 686D. <sup>79</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 18.4–5 DB = V.25.8–10 K.

<sup>80</sup> Julião (2018: 244 with n. 59).

<sup>81</sup> One of a doctor's professional virtues is to have a good memory, *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 4, 99.18–19 Boudon-Millot = XIX.59.2 K.

<sup>82</sup> *San. Tu.* 5.2, 138.6–140.34 Ko. = VI.312.10–318.16 K., including the following passage: 'It is the recollection of what previously existed (ἡ μνήμη δὲ τῶν προγεγονότων) that will show you the fault (τὸ ἁμαρτηθὲν ἐνδείξεταί σοι) and will teach the correction through the comparison with what presently exists (διδάξει τὴν ἐπανόρθωσιν ἐκ τοῦ παραβάλλεσθαι τοῖς ἐνεστῶσιν).'

### Philosophical refutation through personal experience

In the last part of the treatise, Galen gets involved in philosophical debates regarding distress and more specifically the definition of *apatheia*. This passage helps us see how he understands this philosophical concept and makes us aware of the way he deploys it with syncretic flexibility. Although there are instances where Galen is a proponent of the Aristotelian belief in the moderation of emotions, known as *metriopatheia*,<sup>83</sup> there are other instances, for instance in his *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, where he seems to advocate complete freedom from affection (*apatheia*).<sup>84</sup> In *Avoiding Distress* he rejects Stoic *apatheia*, as he is keen to make clear that he has never seen anyone so wise as to be completely free from affections (*Ind.* 16, 84.5-6 PX). Here the allusion is to the Stoic sage, a paradigm of emotional imperviousness, with whom Galen does not want to be identified. Thus, the *apatheia* he has claimed to exercise throughout the essay has its limits:

For I disregard the loss of belongings as long as I am not deprived of everything and banished to a desert island; and [I disregard] bodily pain as long as I am not required to promise that I disregard the bull of Phalaris.<sup>85</sup>  
*Ind.* 16, 84.7-86.9 PX

The bull of Phalaris, a symbol of extreme physical torture in antiquity, is an allusion to the commonly held thesis among Epicureans and Stoics whereby the sage, in light of his *ataraxia* and claims to detachment, taught that life was pleasant even amidst sufferings.<sup>86</sup> Scholars have been perplexed by Galen's unclear attitude towards *apatheia* and *metriopatheia*,<sup>87</sup> but at least in *Avoiding Distress* Galen seems to support a modified version of *apatheia*, freedom not from all emotions but from violent and disruptive ones.

The regulated *apatheia* he professes on a philosophical level also squares with Galen's self-portrait as an ethical archetype. His admission that the destruction of his homeland or a friend's punishment by a tyrant could cause him distress (λυπήσει δέ με, *Ind.* 16, 86.9 PX) shows that he now

<sup>83</sup> Hankinson (2019b: 173-175). <sup>84</sup> Dillon (1983). See also Chapter 6.

<sup>85</sup> Χρημάτων μὲν γὰρ ἀπωλείας καταφρονῶ μέχρι τοῦ μὴ πάντων ἀποστέρηθεις εἰς νῆσον ἐρήμην πεμφθῆναι, πόνου δὲ σωματικοῦ μέχρι τοῦ μὴ καταφρονεῖν ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι τοῦ Φαλάριδος ταύρου.

<sup>86</sup> Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 2.17-18, 5.31; Plutarch, *That it is Impossible to Live a Pleasant Life According to Epicurus* 1088B, 1090A. The same was the case with the Stoic sage, who was expected to have risen above the emotions of pain or anger, *SVF* 3.586.

<sup>87</sup> Gill (2010: 259-260), Hankinson (1993: 198-204), Donini (2008: 194), Singer (2013: 22).

wants to be seen as a model that could be emulated by his readers, since his previous superhuman self-composure would have been beyond the capacity of normal people. So he goes on to pray to Zeus that no distressing event will ever happen to him, radically modifying the corresponding prayer of the Stoic Musonius Rufus, who used to ask Zeus to test him with any affliction. Likewise, he accepts his human weaknesses and acknowledges the unexpected frustration that he might feel as a result of changes to his physical and psychic state. Galen's counsel against distress is here invested with his practical experience, because he never claims to be able to do what he had not shown himself capable of in practice (*Ind.* 16, 88.34-36 PX). His experience in this instance is a vehicle of persuasion.

Galen's ethical optimism is also seen in the final address to his correspondent, which places the latter alongside Galen in terms of nature and education (*Ind.* 16, 88.41 PX) – a sign of merit. By the end of the text two categories of people have been established, the first represented by Galen's addressee who prefers simple food and dressing and is sexually restrained, the second group including all those people who are slaves to sexual desires and can never satisfy their longing for money (*Ind.* 17, 90.2-8 PX). Galen's ethics feeds into the realities of present-day life, since it acknowledges the tendency to aspire to social and political prestige that drives the elite. Here he connects patterns of behaviour to different types of people and reinvigorates assimilation and distancing strategies,<sup>88</sup> similar to those explored in [Chapters 1–3](#). Thus, those people who are only moderately attached to esteem, wealth, reputation and political power are less likely to be afflicted by distress; people whose desires for public reputation are insatiable will lead miserable lives, unaware of the virtue of the soul and suffering grinding distress (*Ind.* 17, 90.9-15 PX).<sup>89</sup> In assessing the two groups, Galen attempts to shape his audience's moral discernment and related decision-making. Critical to that process was also the way Galen showed his readers what would be the more socially acceptable course of action of the two presented to them, thus playing on their sense of social esteem, a pivotal quality of Graeco-Roman aristocracy. So by proposing a particular lifestyle, which Galen hopes the reader will follow, *Avoiding Distress* effectively shares features of the genre of advice literature (as distinct from that of therapeutic literature, according to the ancient classification).

<sup>88</sup> van Hoof (2010: 160–161).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *Protr.* 4-5, 87-89 B. = I.5-7 K., on groups of people with whom Galen discourages identification.

The two kinds of moral attitude that Galen describes above do not stem from theory but from experience, which Galen now calls ‘a teacher of the unexpected’ (Ἀλλ’ἡ πείρα καὶ τῶν ἀπροσδοκῆτων διδάσκαλος γίνεται, *Ind.* 18, 90.1 PX). Elizabeth Asmis has hypothesised that Galen’s reflections in his *Avoiding Distress* encapsulate a ‘personal’ kind of philosophy, ‘which is integrated with one’s life’.<sup>90</sup> This has been construed in the light of Galen’s attachment to truth within the essay, but I think that his life experiences as well as his professional experience help bolster the notion of integration that Asmis sees in Galen’s personal philosophy. The quote above shows that, in Galenic ethics, experience functions strategically as a means of premeditation and a guarantor of success, as it is indeed in technical contexts, for instance in his *The Capacities of Foodstuffs*<sup>91</sup> or in his pharmacological essays *The Composition of Drugs According to Kind* and *The Composition of Drugs According to Places*.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, it is also a philosophical motivation for the composition of moral works. At the end of *Avoiding Distress* Galen’s daily experience with ordinary men stimulates him to reflect on the topic of love of wealth (φιλοπλουτία) – a traditional part of the remit of practical ethics – and write a separate treatise on that, which he also sends to his penfriend (*Ind.* 18, 92.5-7 PX).

### Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have explored Galen’s characteristics as an ethical philosopher in the light of his newly discovered work *Avoiding Distress*. I have shown that his personal reflections on the issue of anxiety related to a particular event from his life help him build a strong ethical voice. And that by reliving his experiences as the victim of the calamity, he offers a precedent of actualised behaviour that can be actualised again, convincing the reader that he has firm knowledge of how to dispel anxiety in similar cases. That Galen’s correspondent is not a mere literary construction but an active associate in the process of reading points to the intimate character of Galen’s ethics and, on another level, helps make his psychological therapy more effective. The exposition of Galen’s losses is revealed gradually and is permeated with his manipulative asides, which suggest to his

<sup>90</sup> Asmis (2014: 129 and 141). <sup>91</sup> *Alim. Fac.* 1.1, 5.23-6.3 Wilkins = VI.457.8-12 K.

<sup>92</sup> van der Eijk (1997a), Totelin (2012). See also *Sem.* 1.2, 64.15-27 De Lacy = IV.513.7-514.6 K. In Galen’s technical texts, *peira* (contrasted to mere *logos*) is usually connected with his strategy of self-promotion and the construction of his authority, on which see e.g. Nutton (2009b). See also, von Staden (1994). On the critical role of empirical research in Greek science, see Lloyd (1979).

addressee and secondary audience considerations and emotions that retrospectively revive the feeling of distress until they ultimately free themselves from it. On many occasions, Galen's applied ethics dovetail with his self-depiction as a practising physician, especially as regards the construction of his authority, the credibility of his account, the importance of personal experience, the issue of the amazement aroused by his performances, and the salience of anamnesis in the process of moral therapy and progress. All these individual features are hardly likely to have occurred in other, now lost, essays *peri alypias*, although this assumption must remain a speculative one.

In his *Avoiding Distress*, Galen resorts to moralising devices of considerable sophistication by combining philosophical remedies from different schools of thought. The rich Stoic background mixed with material from the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition situate Galen firmly within the genre of the therapy of emotions. But at the same time this mix shows that what matters mostly for him is the moralising impact of the philosophical material he is using, even if this means drawing material from schools he was not generally in favour of. His statement towards the end of *Avoiding Distress* that he neither wrote this essay with zealous enthusiasm nor considering it an important task, but simply as a sort of pastime (*Ind.* 15, 84.8-9 PX) is more likely a trope of self-effacement. The dynamics of Galen's ethics not only in *Avoiding Distress* but also as it evolved in *Affections and Errors of the Soul* and elsewhere, expressed in the subtle retexturing of his ethical instruction according to the philosophical level of his addressee and the needs of the argumentation in each case, demonstrates that this statement is not to be trusted.

But the best judge of success is always the audience and, at least as far as *Avoiding Distress* is concerned, its programme of psychological therapy has proved to have benefited not only contemporary readers. The *Vlatadon* manuscript preserves a number of scholiastic lines of Byzantine verse acknowledging Galen's ethical precepts:

Thanks be to you, Galen, for your advice, in which you teach all mortals to bear the uncertainties of life without distress, and not be disturbed at all by the losses; . . . In repeated misfortune, you are a clear beacon in your life.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Σοὶ μὲν, Γαληνέ, τῶν λόγων ἔστω χάρις, | οἷσπερ διδάσκεις τὸν παλίνδρομον βίον | βροτοῦς ἀλυπτότατα σύμπαντας φέρειν | μηδὲ κλονεῖσθαι τοῖς ἀνυπάρκτοις ὄλωσ. . . | αὐτὸς ἀλλεπαλλήλου Τύχης, | εἰκῶν τε σαφῆς ὑπάρχεις ἐν τῷ βίῳ, 92 PX.

This testimony to the Byzantine reception of the text encapsulates the main point I have made here, that the author's life experiences profoundly inform the suggested cure for distress. Most significantly, it acknowledges Galen's contribution as a moral philosopher whose intellectual ambitions embrace the therapy of the emotions across a broad social spectrum.



*Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*

In his history of ancient Rome, Cassius Dio records the story of Gellius Maximus, a legionary commander in Syria, who in 219 AD raised a revolt against the Roman emperor in order to assume supreme power. Cassius considers this incident a most fitting revelation of the degeneracy of the Imperial world, in that the son of a physician had aspired to become emperor (*Roman History* 80.7.1-2). Whatever the historical accuracy as to the social status of the person involved,<sup>1</sup> the story reflects long-standing prejudices against medicine, which had not always been a well-respected profession.<sup>2</sup> One of Galen's most structured attempts to respond to such biases in a single work is perhaps his *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine* (henceforth in its abbreviated form *Exhortation*), which aimed to elevate the status of the art he was so passionately serving.

The *Exhortation*, classified among Galen's works related to the empiricist medical school,<sup>3</sup> is an unusual treatise both in the topics it tackles and in its style and form of argumentation more generally. In the first part (chapters 1-14), the author discusses the importance of engaging with the liberal arts, preparing the ground for a more specialised exaltation of the greatest of them, medicine. That was explored in the second part, which does not survive.

The dual subject of the work might partly explain its controversial title, which continues to perplex scholars to this day. Should it be called *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*, as Galen himself appears to have called it in *My Own Books*?<sup>4</sup> It is given this same title by St Jerome in the

<sup>1</sup> Nutton (1971). <sup>2</sup> Nutton (1985: 39-44).

<sup>3</sup> On empiricism in general, see Edelstein (1967: 195-203), Frede (1987: 243-260), Frede (1988: 79-97), Frede (1990: 225-250) and Hankinson (1995: 60-83). Cf. Hankinson (1988: 227-267).

<sup>4</sup> Εἰς τὸ Μηνοδότου Σεβήρω προτρεπτικός ἐπὶ ἰατρικῆν, *Lib. Prop.* 12, 163.15 Boudon-Millot = XIX.38.9-10 K. Galen mentions Menodotus of Nicomedia (empiricist physician and sceptic philosopher of the 2nd c. AD) several other times, for instance in *PHP* 9.5, 564.24-28 DL = V.751.9-15 K. as well as within his *Outline of Empiricism*. In the former passage, Galen attacks

fourth century<sup>5</sup> and by Ḥunayn ibn ʿIshāq (d. 873) in his Arabic translation of the title.<sup>6</sup> Or should it be called *Exhortation to the Study of the Arts* in accordance with the quite reliable Aldine version (dated to 1525), our earliest surviving testimony of the work in the absence of any Greek manuscript?<sup>7</sup> Whatever the answer to that might be, the existence of two alternative titles found in the various stages of the transmission of the text shows with some degree of certainty that, when the treatise was rediscovered in later times, its two sections must have been received as distinct thematic units,<sup>8</sup> presumably serving the purposes of different readerships. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that the work circulated in two different parts in Galen's own time. Therefore it would be fair to say that it was originally published as a single entity and intended for a specific audience, as will be discussed below.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, although we are not in a position to reconstruct the lost part on medicine, scholars have been right to suggest that it must have contained traditional material about the importance of the medical art, which Galen would have employed in other instances within his corpus, for instance in *The Best Doctor is Also a*

Menodotus for his erroneous opinion that the objective of the medical profession was fame and honour, unlike Diocles, Hippocrates and Empedocles, who rightly considered love for their fellowmen (*philanthrōpia*) the physicians' driving force. That might give us an idea as to why Galen engaged in dialogue with Menodotus's views in the *Exhortation*. On Menodotus, see Favier (1906), Deichgräber (1965: 212–214, 264–265), Hankinson (1995: 76–78) and Hankinson (2001: 317–318).

<sup>5</sup> Jerome, *Adv. Jov.* 2.11, XXIII.300.41–42 Migne: *Exhortatione medicinae*.

<sup>6</sup> Ḥunayn ibn ʿIshāq, *Epistle* 119, ed. and tr. Lamoreaux (2016: 112): 'Exhortation to the Learning of Medicine'. See also Lamoreaux (2016: 112, n. on §119), who mentions that one manuscript reads: 'Exhortation to the Teaching of Medicine'. Bergsträsser (1925: 37–38) no. 110 gives the German translation of Ḥunayn's Arabic title as 'Über die Aufforderung zum Studium der Medizin'.

<sup>7</sup> Galen, *Protr.*, ed. Aldina (1525) 11: Γαληνοῦ παραφράστου τοῦ Μηνοδότου προτρεπτικός λόγος ἐπὶ τὰς τέχνας. On the textual tradition of the work with specific remarks on the Aldine readings, see Wenkebach (1933). Specifically on the essay's title, see Barigazzi (1979: 157–163); cf. Schöne (1920: 148–156).

<sup>8</sup> It is notable in this respect that there is a twelfth-century Arabic manuscript that preserves a summary of the first section of the essay alone.

<sup>9</sup> Some scholars have assumed that Galen's essay *The Capacities of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body* was the second section of the *Exhortation*, but Bazou (2011: 33–36) is right to suggest that, despite having a related theme, the two works were otherwise independent essays. Singer (1997: 407) proposed that the final sentence of the *Exhortation* might point to *Thrasylbulus*, however I believe that the missing part did not contain a different treatise but a second section of the *Exhortation*. This interpretation mainly relies on an expression that Galen uses to conclude the first section, which indicates a change of topic to be dealt with in a separate part that follows directly afterwards: τοῦτο δ'αὐτὸ δεικτέον ἐφεξῆς, *Protr.* 14, 117.18 B. = I.39.10 K. There is a very close parallel in Galen's *The Capacities of Foodstuffs* Book 3, 163.13–14 Wilkins = VI.644.2 K., which ends with ῥητέον ἐφεξῆς as a way of alerting the reader to a new section coming up. This is a common practice in other medical authors as well, for instance Oribasius, *Medical Collections* 7.1.7, I.195.10 Raeder, or Aëtius of Amida, *Tetrabiblos* 16.60, 83.1–2 Zervos.

*Philosopher*.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, Galen's encouragement of participation in the arts, which reflects his interest in philosophical education *per se*, points to a less familiar aspect of his thinking and one that can help us penetrate below the surface appearance of an allegedly technical treatise.<sup>11</sup>

In this Chapter, I wish to focus on the moralising techniques that permeate Galen's *Exhortation* and explore how these inform the construction of his moral authority. I want to look, in addition, at the ways in which he tailors his ethical advice to respond to the needs of his intended audience, comprising, I would suggest, adolescents who are about to start their intermediate education and are being urged to engage with professional studies, beginning with philosophy and progressing on to medicine. I aim to throw some interpretative light on this relatively neglected work by also discussing its rhetorical force vis-à-vis its literary peers (both earlier and later)<sup>12</sup> and especially by arguing that Galen is influenced by Plutarch, as a key moralist of the early Roman Imperial period, in his writing.

The surviving essay can be divided into two sections; chapters 1–8 juxtapose the permanent benefits of acquiring skills in the arts with unpredictable changes of fate, while chapters 9–14 describe at some length the risks associated with intense physical exercise.

### Arts vs Fate

We have seen in the [previous Chapter](#) that Galen employs the philosophical subgenre of therapy to instruct his anonymous friend as well as a wider audience on how to manage the destructive emotion of distress. In the *Exhortation* Galen engages with another ethical subgenre, that of the protreptic, which conventionally aims to encourage (προτρέπειν) the study of philosophy and the attainment of virtue.<sup>13</sup> That is the approach employed, for instance, in Plato's *Phaedo* and *Euthydemus*,<sup>14</sup> in Aristotle's

<sup>10</sup> Boudon (2000: 6); cf. Boudon (2000: 41 n. 84) and Damiani (2018: 306, 314). Apart from Boudon, the most important editions of the *Exhortation* are Marquardt (1884), Kaibel (1894; repr. 1963), Wenkebach (1935), Barigazzi (1991).

<sup>11</sup> Rosen (2013: 180) calls it 'paramedical', since it deals with the risks involved in athletics.

<sup>12</sup> Partial exceptions in discussing the rhetorical value of the work are Szarmach (1990–1992), Curtis (2014: 41–50) and Petit (2018: 204–206).

<sup>13</sup> On the genre of the protreptic in antiquity, see e.g. Hartlich (1889), Burgess (1902: 228–234), Slings (1995) and Slings (1999: 59–164). Cf. Schneeweiss (2005: 14–15, 18–19) and Schenkeveld (1997: 204–213). On Galen's protreptic in particular, see Hartlich (1889: 316–326). On the caveats regarding the generic classification of philosophical protreptic, see the study by Jordan (1986). On the peculiar features of the protreptic in the post-classical centuries, see Polemis (2002: 16–41).

<sup>14</sup> For instance, Höfle (2004); also Konrad (1959), Festugière (1973).

fragmentary *Protreptic*,<sup>15</sup> Isocrates's *Antidosis*<sup>16</sup> or the much later *Protreptic* by Iamblichus (ca. 245–ca. 325 AD),<sup>17</sup> although the origins of the genre may go back as far as the writings of the fifth-century sophists.<sup>18</sup> Also associated with the exhortative performances of professional orators in law courts (e.g. those of Gorgias or Lysias), the protreptic continued to be used to persuade an audience not so much through rational arguments as through emotional appeals. As such it became a philosophical genre with rhetorical force, or more broadly a combination of rhetoric and popular philosophy.<sup>19</sup> In many instances, I will explicitly show the function of what I call Galen's 'moralising rhetoric', which makes use of epideictic elements to bring about his readers' self-reform.<sup>20</sup>

The *Exhortation* starts with Galen expressing some scepticism as to whether the so-called irrational animals are indeed entirely devoid of reason.<sup>21</sup> Such agnostic statements often have a rhetorical purpose rather than being intended as a philosophical stimulus for further reflection, because they are often immediately countered by a remark reflecting Galen's certain knowledge so as to win the reader over.<sup>22</sup> Thus, in this instance, he goes on to assert that, although some animals possess at least some degree of reason, they certainly do not have the capacity to learn whichever art they choose in the way man does (*Protr.* 1, 84.8–13 B. = I.2–3 K.).<sup>23</sup>

The sharp distinction between rational humans and irrational animals was posited in orthodox Stoicism by Chrysippus,<sup>24</sup> who surmised that

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Barigazzi (1978: 212–213). On the place of Aristotle's *Protreptic* in the development of his ethical theory, see Gadamer (1928). The pseudo-Isocratean *Ad Demonicum* was probably written in response to Aristotle's *Protrepticus*.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, von der Mühl (1939).

<sup>17</sup> For Iamblichus's *Protreptic*, see for instance Flashar (1965).

<sup>18</sup> The protreptic is very close to the genre of *paraenesis* and, apart from isolated cases (for instance Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1.1), classical philosophers did not on the whole distinguish between the two genres, indeed they very often merged them. See Malherbe (1986: 121–127). Regarding the modern differentiation between the two genres, Stowers (1986: 92) uses 'protreptic' in reference to hortatory literature that calls the audience to a new and different way of life, and *paraenesis* for advice and exhortation to continue in a certain way of life. The terms, however, were used this way only sometimes and not consistently in antiquity.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Burgess (1902: 228–229).

<sup>20</sup> On Galen and his contemporary readers in general, see Johnson (2010: 74–97).

<sup>21</sup> Galen, *Protr.* 1, 84.1–2 B. = I.1.5–6 K. This was a traditional Stoic *topos* that was particularly prominent in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* 13.6–9 and *Memorabilia* 1.4.9–14. On Galen's scepticism, see De Lacy (1991: 283–306).

<sup>22</sup> The same technique can be found in *Ind.* 16, 84.5–86.1 PX.

<sup>23</sup> Similar ideas on man's superiority to animals are found in *UP* 1.2–4, 2.11–6.17 Helmreich = III.3.3–9.3 K. and *Mot. Dub.* 4.12–13, 138.2–9 Nutton.

<sup>24</sup> See for instance, Plutarch, *On the Eating of Flesh* 2.6.

animals could not be endowed with any reason. But Galen seems to take a more flexible stance here by accepting the existence of at least some sort of animal intelligence. This aligns him with the Stoic Posidonius of Apamea (ca. 135–ca. 51 BC), who, as Galen himself tells us in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, attributed emotions to animals such as pleasure (ἡδονή) and anger (θυμός).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Galen's eagerness to acknowledge the limited existence of animal rationality rather than dismiss it altogether shows how close he is to Plutarch's influential thesis that all animals, to a greater or lesser extent, are endowed with reason. Plutarch was central to the debate over the mental capacities of animals in that he devoted three separate treatises to exploring the issue systematically, viz. *On the Cleverness of Animals*, *Whether Beasts are Rational* (also known as *Gryllus*) and *On the Eating of Flesh*, as well as independent discussions in other essays in his *Moralia*, for example in *On the Love of Offspring* and *Table Talk*, all of which, as Stephen Newmyer has persuasively contended, attest to his substantial contribution to this philosophical question.<sup>26</sup> Above all Galen's reference to the intellectual abilities of land animals<sup>27</sup> (rather than of marine creatures) and, in the same context, the employment of illustrative examples that entail specifically spiders and bees,<sup>28</sup> are elements found in Plutarch's animal-related accounts,<sup>29</sup> which make a strong case for Galen's dependence on him.<sup>30</sup> This is part of a broader proposal I will be making throughout, which is primarily supported by the fact that Galen was well aware of the work of Plutarch, quoting from it several times throughout his writings either explicitly or in less direct ways.<sup>31</sup> In the *Exhortation* Galen's emphasis on man's ability to learn and perform any

<sup>25</sup> *PHP* 4.7, 288.14–18 DL = V.424.7–12 K.; *PHP* 5.6, 332.29–334.15 DL = V.476.6–477.9 K.

<sup>26</sup> Newmyer (2005). The issue goes back to the early Peripatos, e.g. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1102a26–1103a3. Cf. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, II.3, 414b28 ff. See also Books 8 and 9 of the Aristotelian *History of Animals*. Fortenbaugh (2011) discusses the Peripatetics' place in the ancient discussion on animal intelligence with special reference to Theophrastus and Strato of Lampsacus.

<sup>27</sup> *Protr.* 1, 85.4 B. = I.2.11 K.      <sup>28</sup> *Protr.* 1, 85.3 B. = I.2.9–10 K.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Plutarch, *On the Cleverness of Animals* 970B–C, where terrestrial and earth-born animals are deemed likely to be cleverer than sea creatures. On the other hand, references to bees may be found in 967B, 976D, 980B, 981B and 982F, and references to spiders in 966E and 974A–B.

<sup>30</sup> Examples involving bees, ants, spiders and swallows can be found in other authors as well, for example Cicero, Philo, Pliny the Elder and Aelian. Dickerman (1911) suggested that they all draw on a common source (presumably Alcmaeon of Croton, 5th c. BC). Even if that is true, one cannot exclude the possibility of Galen having read and directly quoted Plutarch rather than an earlier source, which might not only have been less easily available but also less well preserved. In Xenophontos (2016b) I argue in favour of Galen's dependence on Plutarch in more detail.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. *Opt. Doct.* 92.12 Barigazzi = I.41.4 K.; *PHP* 3.2, 182.24–25 DL = V.300.16–17 K. See also Nutton (2009a: 24, 32–33) on Galen's reading of Plutarch and how he was influenced by him.

art, a skill that as a rule all other animals lack, seems an intentional reversal of Plutarch's *On the Cleverness of Animals* 966E-F, which refers to spiders' webs being admired and imitated by man in weaving. Galen focuses more on man's limitless ability to imitate and learn, which transcends animals' inborn and very limited set of skills.<sup>32</sup> This twist serves as the springboard for the ensuing narrative, in which Galen establishes the uniqueness of man by explaining his potential for practising the arts as the result of deliberative choice (*prohairesis*)<sup>33</sup> rather than of inherited nature (*physis*).<sup>34</sup>

The reference to *prohairesis* ('volition' or 'reasoned/moral choice') is important on account of its association with the Platonic and Aristotelian educational model, where it constitutes a decisive aspect of virtue and character.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the distinction made between humans and animals in this prefatory context is predicated on the assumption that education (*paideia*), as a product of exercise and habituation, is an exclusively human asset. That explains why Galen goes on to stress the significance of training for human education<sup>36</sup> and to praise the continuous effort that helps man acquire the most outstanding of divine gifts, philosophy.<sup>37</sup> Galen therefore provides justification for the necessity of studying the arts, assuring his readers that his literary text is appropriate to their intellectual status.

The elements of irrationality, nature and hard work bring to mind Seneca's *Letter* 90, which is also taken to be an exhortation.<sup>38</sup> This describes in nostalgic terms the golden age of mankind, in order to stress that the business of philosophy has always been the pursuit of moral virtue by living in harmony with nature, rather than achieving technological progress and material sufficiency. It thus seeks to refute Posidonius's claim that humans had discovered the arts through philosophical training.<sup>39</sup> The emphasis that Galen puts on the notion of training therefore further attests

<sup>32</sup> Cf. also Plutarch's *Whether Beasts are Rational* 991D-F, where animals are said to be naturally attuned to learning. Galen is keen to use animal imagery to enable readers to make sense of difficult concepts or processes through comparison. He may be influenced by the earlier tradition for some of these images, but he often transforms them in distinctive ways. See Nutton (2020: 57). I am grateful to Katarzyna Jażdżewska for discussion on this point.

<sup>33</sup> Galen, *Protr.* 1, 84.14 B. = I.2.7 K.; προαιρέσει. <sup>34</sup> Galen, *Protr.* 1, 84.14 B. = I.2.6 K.; φύσει.

<sup>35</sup> See, for instance, Chamberlain (1984).

<sup>36</sup> ὁ δ' ἄνθρωπος οὐτε τινὸς τῶν παρ' ἐκείνοις μελέτητος ('but it is not just that man is practised in all their arts'), *Protr.* 1, 85.1-2 B. = I.2.8 K.; οὐκ ἀνάσκητός ἐστι ('demonstrating considerable skill'), *Protr.* 1, 85.4 B. = I.2.10 K. Translations of the *Exhortation* come from Singer (1997) with modifications, as his translation is based both on the edition by Marquardt (1884) and the one by Barigazzi (1991).

<sup>37</sup> *Protr.* 1, 85.11-12 B. = I.3.1-2 K.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Nikolaidis (2002: 22-23), who warns that Seneca's *Letter* 90 should not be taken as a protreptic in the strict sense, despite the features it shares with traditional protreptics.

<sup>39</sup> Seneca, *Letter* 90.7; cf. 90.11-12, 90.17-18. See one of the latest studies by van Nuffelen and van Hoof (2013). According to Proclus, together with persuasion, dissuasion, 'midwifery', praise and blame, refutation is one of the ways of bringing man to self-knowledge (*First Alcibiades* 8.13-14).

to his affiliation to Posidonius, which in turn makes it highly probable that he might have been influenced by the latter's lost *Protreptic*.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, by defining the notion of *physis* as inherited traits rather than a mode of living in harmony with nature (as the orthodox Stoics did), and by associating it with the idea of philosophical practice, Galen situates himself in the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition and shows how experimental he is in his philosophical allegiances. Thus far our author appears as an intellectually diverse thinker, who favours doctrinal interpenetration rather than sectarian devotion, as was also noted in the [previous Chapter](#).

Although some of the notions that Galen expresses up to this point are commonplace in the genre of the protreptic, especially the animal imagery and the role of *physis*, it is remarkable that he transposes them from theoretical or technical frameworks into a setting of practical ethics, giving them an intimate role in his reader's moral progress. In Galen's text the protreptic elements open up direct channels of communication between the experienced advisor (i.e. the author/narrator) and the less experienced recipient, whom Galen expects to learn to become alert and discriminating. For example, he frequently employs the distancing and assimilation strategies we have observed in the [previous Chapter](#), i.e. clever techniques which depict groups of people whom the reader is advised either to despise or emulate so as to acquire virtue. In this way Galen prompts his audience to make the proper moral choices that are characteristic of their philosophical background and which differentiate them from animals, as we shall soon see in more detail. Thus the employment of animal imagery in the context of the *Exhortation* clearly serves a hortatory purpose,<sup>41</sup> in contrast to its function in three ethical/psychological texts by Galen, *Character Traits*,<sup>42</sup> *Affections and Errors of the Soul*<sup>43</sup> and *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*,<sup>44</sup> in which animals are treated as representations of the uncontrollable impulses of the irrational faculty of the soul that need to be managed by the rational part and exhorted to obedience and habitual discipline. As such, they bear witness to their Platonic counterparts in the *Republic* 588c-d or *Phaedrus* 253c-254a and are inserted into Galen's argumentation in order to gloss the doctrine of the division and function of the soul, rather than to instruct ethically in an intimate, hands-on and

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Rainfurt (1904: 56) and Boudon (2000: 15–16).

<sup>41</sup> In this connection, von Staden (2003: 18–19, with n. 19) refers to Galen's use of *alogos* as a term of ridicule and abuse.

<sup>42</sup> *De Mor.* 28 Kr.; cf. *De Mor.* 42 Kr.; English translation by Mattock (1972) and Davies in Singer (2013).

<sup>43</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 19.8–20 DB = V.27.6–28.3 K.

<sup>44</sup> *PHP* 6.2, 368.12–370.23 DL = V.515.1–518.2 K.

reader-friendly manner. These three texts are surely targeted at readers who were more advanced in terms of philosophical study than the readers of the *Exhortation*, and who were more in need of help to make sense of philosophical terms and theories on the soul than of helpful advice on how to embark upon a good life.

We have already started encountering cases in which the same elements (in this instance the animal imagery) recur in both technical passages relating to moral psychology and in popular philosophical texts, but which at the same time seem to serve rather different purposes depending on the context and intended meaning of each passage, as well as the intellectual and/or moral level of its recipient. Such retexturing of similar material appears not just throughout Galen's own ethical and psychological essays, but also in relation to his technical works on how to maintain good health (as we shall see later on), and, interestingly, in relation to other ancient protreptics. For instance, Iamblichus's *Protreptic* also suggests that reason renders humans divine and distinguishes them from all other creatures,<sup>45</sup> but the author does this in order to preach through systematic exposition the value of philosophy in general, and not as a rhetorical device to challenge the reader to immediate moral reflection, as happens in Galen's *Exhortation*.

Galen's text goes on, in chapter 2, to further stress the divide between irrationality and rationality, an issue which is introduced by a set of powerful rhetorical questions expressed in the sociative 'we':

Is it not vile, then, to neglect the one part of us which we share with the gods, while busying ourselves<sup>46</sup> with some other matter? To disregard the acquisition of Art, and entrust ourselves to Fate?<sup>47</sup> *Protr.* 2, 85.16-19 B. = I.3.5-8 K.

The above passage, apart from suggesting that humans are capable of union with the divine, thus building on the assimilation strategy, also

<sup>45</sup> Iambl. *Protr.* 8, 48.9-21 Pistelli: 'Nothing therefore either divine or blessed subsists in man except the element of intellect and insight, which alone is worthy of any attention or study: for this alone of us is immortal and divine. And, moreover, the fact that we are able to participate in this intellectual power, though our life is naturally miserable and grievous, and yet is tempered with so much that is sensuously agreeable, demonstrates that in relation to other things on the earth man seems to be a god. For our intellect is a god, and our mortal life is a participant of a certain deity, as either Hermetimus or Anaxagoras said. Wherefore we must either philosophize – or, bidding farewell to physical life, go from this place, because all other things are full of trifles and rubbish.' (transl. Johnson in Neuville and Johnson 1988).

<sup>46</sup> ἔσπουδακέναι with Barigazzi (1991) following Kaibel (1894); Boudon (2000) prints ἐσπουκέναι in line with the Aldine edition.

<sup>47</sup> πῶς οὐκ αἰσχρόν, ὥς μόνω τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν κοινωνοῦμεν θεοῖς, τούτου μὲν ἀμελεῖν, ἐσπουδακέναι δὲ περὶ τι τῶν ἄλλων, τέχνης μὲν ἀναλήψεως καταφρονούντα, Τύχη δ' ἑαυτὸν ἐπιτρέποντα;



conveys the two categories of ethical evaluation, praise and blame, in terms of the moral decisions we make as rational agents. The accumulation of terms denoting condemnation and public contempt awakens the reader's sense of social honour, and Galen's persuasion technique becomes more forceful once he inserts a word picture of *Tychē* and of Hermes together with their devotees. The literary *ekphrasis* of *Tychē* situates Galen within a long philosophical tradition, which dealt with the mutability of fate in an effort to prove the necessity of emotional resilience achieved through philosophical training. Similar descriptions occur in the *Tabula* of Cebes,<sup>48</sup> in Plutarch's *On the Fortune of the Romans* (317C–318D) which presents a similar opposition between Fortune and Virtue,<sup>49</sup> in Dio of Prusa's *Orations* 63–65 (three self-contained discussions on fate) and in Favorinus's treatise *On Fortune*, with which Galen enters into dialogue, presumably as a result of the *ad hominem* attack he had made on Favorinus.<sup>50</sup>

Unlike his predecessors, however, Galen dwells on the issue of fate by developing singular twists in his narrative. A striking example of this is the way he incorporates in his *Avoiding Distress* the destructive fate that incinerated a significant part of his library and medical instruments in the conflagration of 192 AD. We have seen how in that context evoking the vagaries of human affairs was expected to have a direct impact on the psychological state of the reader in that it retrospectively revived the feeling of distress as a way of eventually healing it (Chapter 4). In the *Exhortation*, however, the dangers of fate do not seem to have any psychotherapeutic function. They are meant rather to guide readers by means of delightful imagery, which in turn might hint at Galen's concern to make his narrative attractive to people who had yet to become acquainted with the ups and downs of life, without unduly upsetting them.

The assumption of a young readership is reinforced by the similes we find in the description of *Tychē* in particular, which are intended to help readers visualise its form and associated qualities. The ancients, Galen tells us, depicted *Tychē* as a woman with a rudder in her hands, a spherical

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Cebes, *Tabula* 7.1–3, 9.4, 18.1–3. The standard edition is that of Prächter (1893); more recent editions in Pesce (1982) and Fitzgerald and White (1983). The *Tabula* should be read alongside the discussion in Trapp (1997), where additional references can be found.

<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, the part of the treatise in which Fortune and Virtue are directly contrasted is the beginning, 316C ff.

<sup>50</sup> Succinctly in Boudon-Millot (2007: 12–14). Favorinus was a contemporary of Galen, whom Galen lambasted in his ethical work *Against Favorinus's Attack on Socrates* as well as in his *The Best Method of Teaching*.

support for her feet and with no eyes.<sup>51</sup> Not only, according to Galen, is her gender a sufficient index of inanity, but trusting her is like committing the same sort of mistake as handing the rudder of a ship in danger of capsizing to a blind helmsman.<sup>52</sup> The image of the helmsman, which Galen adduces twice more in this text,<sup>53</sup> is of Platonic origin with important Presocratic antecedents, and was often employed in ethical tracts of popular philosophy, especially those of Plutarch.<sup>54</sup>

The two groups of followers, those who trust to luck and those who rely on rationality, are illustrated by historical and mythical examples as well as more general allegorical figures each time, making the text even more accessible. So the adherents of Fate are idle and ignorant and comprise a whole band of demagogues, courtesans, betrayers of friends, desecrators of graves and even murderers.<sup>55</sup> Conversely, Hermes's followers consist of noble and knowledgeable men of mild conduct, including geometers, mathematicians, philosophers, doctors and scholars alongside architects, grammarians and ultimately such great men as Socrates, Homer, Hippocrates and Plato.<sup>56</sup> Once he has set up this duality, Galen exploits his protreptic moralism and makes brief encouraging or discouraging remarks to direct the reader more explicitly. In both cases he uses the second-person-singular form of address<sup>57</sup> and claims that careful examination of the band of Fortune will lead to loathing (μισήσεις ὅλως τὸν χορὸν, *Protr.* 4, 88.13-14 B. = I.6.10 K.), whereas moralising contemplation of Hermes's chorus will excite both emulation and adoration (Τοῦτον . . . τὸν χορὸν . . . οὐ μόνον ζηλώσεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ προσκυνήσεις, *Protr.* 5, 89.16-18 B. = I.8.1-3 K.).

The reader is subtly prompted to identify with the followers of Hermes by the author's explanation that this god does not judge people on the basis of political reputation, nobility or wealth, but on whether they lead a

<sup>51</sup> *Protr.* 2, 85.20-86.5 B. = I.3.9-13 K. See Nutton (1991b: 13). On Galen's attitude to the figurative arts, especially sculpture and painting, see Boudon (2001).

<sup>52</sup> *Protr.* 2, 86.5-8 B. = I.3.14-17 K.

<sup>53</sup> *Protr.* 8, 97.6-8 B. = I.16.14-16 K.; *Protr.* 10, 102.20 B. = I.23.8-9 K.

<sup>54</sup> See, for instance, Plutarch's *On Moral Virtue* 452B, *On the Tranquillity of the Soul* 475E-F, *Table Talk* 663D, *Old Men in Public Affairs* 787D, *Political Precepts* 801C-D. See also Chapter 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Protr.* 4, 87.19-88.11 B. = I.5.13-6.8 K.

<sup>56</sup> *Protr.* 5, 88.19-89.21 B. = I.6.15-8.6 K. The assimilation strategy seems to be a common practice employed by Galen. In his *Recognising the Best Physician*, he claims that it befits heroes and rich men to learn medicine, *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 111.1-2 I.

<sup>57</sup> What Damiani (2018: 308) has seen as a kind of *Appellstruktur*, 'the frequent insertion of formulations directly appealing to the addressee – a feature typical of didactic literature. Its function is to underscore the importance of what is being said and to establish a form of interaction between the author and the recipient.'

good life (τοὺς καλῶς μὲν βιοῦντας, *Protr.* 5, 89.12-13 B. = I.7.15-16 K.).<sup>58</sup> Good living (εὖ ζῆν) is the very essence of ethical philosophy and interestingly the association of Hermes with a whole branch of philosophy is entirely consistent with the way Galen uses Hermes in his *Character Traits* as a figure who leads human beings to assimilation with the divine after teaching them how above all else to despise worldly pleasures.<sup>59</sup> The affinities between the two works are symptomatic of a network of cross-references suitably adjusted to the twists and turns in the argument of each text. In addition to Hermes, the insertion of the anecdote about Aristippus, a proverbial model of self-sufficiency in ethical literature (especially in moral diatribes), lends legitimacy to Galen's ethical production. Aristippus is deployed both in *Avoiding Distress*, as we have seen, and in Plutarch's *Tranquillity of the Soul*, although in the *Exhortation* Galen provides us with three interrelated stories about him and seems to be drawing on Posidonius's *Protrepticus*.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the fact that the paradigm of Aristippus was intended to show that material wealth was something trivial and unimportant to human life,<sup>61</sup> Galen emphasises that many people who found themselves destitute committed suicide (*Protr.* 6, 91.1-5 B. = I.9.6-10 K.). Presenting opposing attitudes to the loss of possessions points up the extent to which Galen differed from Philides the grammarian, whom he cites in *Avoiding Distress* as having died of depression caused by the loss of his property, whereas Galen cheerfully continued his normal activities regardless of his own losses in that same disaster.<sup>62</sup> Galen disapproves of people who neglect their spiritual condition and who are more preoccupied with worldly blessings. He considers them equal to the most worthless slave,<sup>63</sup> once again challenging his reader's sense of honour.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to this, Galen's moralism starts to take on the acerbic features of Cynic philosophy not only in that it appropriates the opinions of Antisthenes and Diogenes, but above all in that Galen himself is walking in their footsteps when he bitterly attacks rich and uneducated people for falling victim to the self-interest of flatterers:

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Protr.* 3, 87.7-9 B. = I.5.2-4 K.      <sup>59</sup> *De Mor.* 40-41 Kr.

<sup>60</sup> Boudon-Millot (2007: 15-16).      <sup>61</sup> Cf. *Opt. Med.* 288.14-17 Boudon-Millot = I.58.2-4 K.

<sup>62</sup> *Ind.* 1, 54.10-11 PX; *Ind.* 1, 56.24-28 PX;      <sup>63</sup> *Protr.* 6, 91.22 B. = I.10.8 K.

<sup>64</sup> See αἰσχροὺς ('despicable'), ἡτιμάκασιν ('they disgraced'), ἀποβλήτοις τῶν οἰκετῶν εἰοίκασιν ('they are equivalent to the reject servants'), all in *Protr.* 6, 9 B. = I.9-11 K., and also in the passage cited above. Similarly in his introduction to *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 42.5-9 I., 9, 111.5-12 I., and his *San. Tu.* 5.1, 137.26-138.5 Ko. = VI.311.9-312.9 K.

So perhaps the comparison of such men (i.e. flatterers) to wells is not unreasonable. When a well, which once provided them with water, dries up, people lift up their clothes and urinate in it.<sup>65</sup> *Protr.* 6, 92.14-17 B. = I.11.3-7 K.

In similar vein, Galen castigates people who boast of their noble descent, unaware of the fact that their nobility is like the coinage of a state, which has currency with the local inhabitants but is worthless to everyone else.<sup>66</sup> By making a link to Antisthenes, who is credited with being the originator of the philosophical protreptic,<sup>67</sup> Galen might be staking a claim to being his emulator and perhaps a reformer of the genre he introduced.

Indeed, besides traits of the Stoic-Cynic diatribe combined with those of the protreptic, Galen's account features characteristics of mainstream educational works and echoes in particular Plutarch's *On Listening to Poetry*.<sup>68</sup> It is striking, for instance, that Galen quotes both from Euripides's *Phoenician Women* (404-405) and Homer's *Iliad* (4.405), the most important school texts in that period,<sup>69</sup> which are also present in Plutarch's essay, and that he amends poetical lines to make them suit the moral message of his exposition. This is a key pedagogical technique, which Plutarch applies in instructing young readers how they should interpret poetry in a morally upright way and benefit from it as a preliminary stage to philosophy. The recurring use of imperative forms of *akouein*, a didactic directive that is interpreted to mean not simply 'hearing' but also 'critically considering what is being heard', is a typical trope in didactic communications, also present in Plutarch's essay (more on this below).<sup>70</sup> In discussing the importance of eugenics, Galen argues that noble ancestors instigate a desire to emulate their example,<sup>71</sup> intersecting both verbally and conceptually, for example, with the near-contemporary *On the Education of Children*, an essay now considered pseudo-Plutarchan,

<sup>65</sup> ὅθεν οὐδ' ὁ ταῖς κρήναις τοὺς τοιοῦτους εἰκάσας ἄμουσός τις ἦν. Καὶ γὰρ τοὶ καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν κρηνῶν ὑδρευμένοι πρόσθεν, ἐπειδὴν μηκέτ' ἔχωσιν ὕδωρ, ἀνασπράμνουν προσουροῦσι.

<sup>66</sup> *Protr.* 7, 93.1-7 B. = I.11.7-11 K.

<sup>67</sup> Burgess (1902: 234), Hartlich (1889: 225-226), Gorgemanns (2001: 469-470).

<sup>68</sup> On Galen's attitude to Greek poetic tradition in his *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, see De Lacy (1966). Cf. Rosen (2013).

<sup>69</sup> Cribiore (1996), Morgan (1998: 50-89).

<sup>70</sup> *Protr.* 10, 103.6 B. = I.23.14 K.: ἀκουσον; *Protr.* 10, 103.18 B. = I.24.9 K.: ἄκουε πάλιν; *Protr.* 10, 104.4 B. = I.24.13 K.: ἀκούειν ἐθέλεις; *Protr.* 10, 104.5 B. = I.24.10 K.: ἄκουε πάλιν; *Protr.* 10, 104.15 B. = I.25.6 K.: ἀκούση. Cf. Schenkeveld (1992). See also Galen's *On Habits* 4, II.28.1-4 Müller.

<sup>71</sup> *Protr.* 7, 93.15-16 B. = I.12-10 K.: πρὸς οἰκίον παράδειγμα τὸν ζῆλον ἡμῖν γίγνεσθαι.

though thought to be authentic in antiquity.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, Galen's emphasis on the emulation of noble exemplars and the severe criticism that he applies to any moral misconduct contribute to his self-depiction as a supervisor of morals, whose role in overseeing and correcting the ethical failings of less experienced agents is crucial, especially in his *Affections and Errors of the Soul*.<sup>73</sup> Finally, Galen's proreptic on engagement with the arts resembles the introduction to Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* (1.9-10), a basic educational manual of the Roman Imperial period, which also begins with a proreptic concerning the study of the liberal arts. In the light of the above, we can see that Galen's *Exhortation* has a pedagogical character and was intended to have an appeal as an educational text in the transitional stage between secondary education and advanced studies.

In encouraging sensible people to practise the arts, Galen refers specifically to Themistocles as an example of a man who became a significant figure despite his lowly birth on his mother's side.<sup>74</sup> The dictum usually attributed to Themistocles survives in Plutarch's *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* (187B) and in Stobaeus's *Anthology* (4.29.15) where it is attributed to Iphicrates instead. This misattribution may suggest Plutarch's influence on Galen (see *Life of Themistocles*, 1.1-4), given that Galen seems to have consulted two other moral works by the same author in this context, as noted above, and presumably also the *Life of Solon* 22.1 for his *Exhortation* ch. 8.<sup>75</sup> Stobaeus (4.29.21-22) informs us that there was a work by Plutarch entitled *Against Nobility* (Κατὰ εὐγενείας) in which the dictum of Themistocles may have been mentioned, although this

<sup>72</sup> In Xenophon (2016b) I discuss the similarities between the two works, suggesting a *terminus ante quem* for the *On the Education of Children* in the light of Galen's *Exhortation*. It is true that the same thought appears in other moral(ising) texts too, e.g. in Cicero, *For Lucius Murena* 66: 'you said that you had a domestic example to imitate' (*domesticum te habere dixisti exemplum ad imitandum*), but it is only reasonable to assume that Galen was more familiar with near-contemporary Greek sources rather than earlier, Latin ones. The issue of Galen's knowledge of Latin has still not been sufficiently explored; see, for example, Herbst (1911: 137-138); cf. Nutton (2012: 540).

<sup>73</sup> 'Those, however, who are in the grip of moderate affections, and are thus able to recognize a little of the truth of the above statements, if, as I have previously said, they appoint a monitor or tutor, who, by constant reminders, by criticism, by exhortation and encouragement to hold back from the stronger affections, and by providing himself as an example of all those statements and exhortations, will be able, by the use of words, to make their souls free and noble' (ἐὰν δέ τις ἔτι μετρίως δουλεύῃ πάθει γινῶναι τ' [ἀν] οὕτως δύνηται τι τῶν πρότερον εἰρημένων, ἐπιστήσας ἑαυτῷ, καθάπερ ἔμπροσθεν εἶπον, ἐπόπτην τινὰ καὶ παιδαγωγόν, ὅστις ἐκάστοτε τὰ μὲν ἀναμνησκῶν αὐτόν, τὰ δ' ἐπιπλήττων, τὰ δὲ προτρέπων τε καὶ παρορμῶν ἔχουσαι τῶν κρείττωνων, ἑαυτὸν τε παράδειγμα παρέχων ἐν ἅπασιν, ὧν λέγει τε καὶ προτρέπει, δυνήσεται κατασκευάσαι λόγους ἐλευθέρων τε καὶ καλῶν τῆν ψυχῆν), *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 35.9-16 DB = V.52-18-53.9 K.

<sup>74</sup> *Protr.* 7, 94.20-22 B. = I.14-15 K. <sup>75</sup> *Protr.* 8, 96.3-14 B. = I.15.9-16.2 K.

remains pure speculation and it is safer to assume that Galen might have drawn on the *Life of Themistocles* instead.

Be that as it may, the dictum of Themistocles, in addition to discounting the role of noble birth as a factor in ethical propriety, also reinforces the antithesis pride vs. shame that is omnipresent in Galen's text from the beginning. Galen goes on to link this concept with a key topic in the cultural discourse of the period, namely ethnic identity.<sup>76</sup> By referring to the case of the Scythian Anacharsis, who was admired for his wisdom despite his barbarian birth, Galen teaches that moral behaviour, an acquired state, raises men above nobility and ethnicity, inherited qualities that are totally beyond their control. That seems to be a persistent issue in his *Exhortation*, also present in the anecdotes of Aristippus previously discussed.<sup>77</sup> The Stoics believed that anything that is not 'up to us' should not impinge on our happiness (this is their doctrine of the moral 'indifferents', as noted above),<sup>78</sup> but Galen here revises the idea, claiming that what is not up to us should not play a role in any moral evaluation of us:

Once mocked as a barbarian and Scythian, Anacharsis said: 'my fatherland disgraces me, but you disgrace your fatherland', a very fine response to a worthless person who gave himself airs solely on the strength of his homeland.<sup>79</sup> *Protr.* 7, 95.1-5 B. = I.14.1-5 K.

Galen's position aligns with the story of the slaves of Perennis used in *Character Traits* to show that moral integrity is unrelated to social class or education.<sup>80</sup> Before ending the first part of the essay, Galen raises the issue of beauty and how this can hinder young people from caring for their psychic condition. He employs moral exempla from Solon, Euripides and Sappho, who all agreed that physical beauty did not guarantee happiness but rather threatened it. Additionally, Galen stresses that youth offers only temporary pleasures, and therefore he urges his young readers to develop special regard for the end of their life and appreciate old age.<sup>81</sup> Once more Galen assesses the impact of pre-philosophical/worldly externals, depending on whether they contribute to one's inner well-being or social adulation: e.g. acquiring money (χρηματισμός) through bodily charm is

<sup>76</sup> See also [Chapter 7](#). <sup>77</sup> Especially *Protr.* 5, 90.4-8 B. = I.8.9-13 K.

<sup>78</sup> Epicetetus, *Discourses* 3.24.67-69.

<sup>79</sup> οὗτός ποτε πρὸς τίνος ὄνειδιζόμενος, ὅτι βάρβαρος εἶη καὶ Σκύθης· «ἐμοὶ μὲν ἡ πατρις ὄνειδος, σὺ δὲ τῇ πατρίδι», πάνυ καλῶς ἐπιπλήξας τῷ μηδενὸς ἀξίῳ λόγου, μόνον δ' ἐπὶ τῇ πατρίδι σεμνυομένῳ. Cf. Galen's *Protr.* 6, 92.19-21 B. = I.11.9-11 K.

<sup>80</sup> This is a fragment of *Character Traits* surviving in Ibn Abi Uṣaybi'ah, *Deeds of the Physicians* ('*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*) Kraus 14; translated in Singer (2013: 180).

<sup>81</sup> *Protr.* 8, 96.3-97.22 B. = I.15.9-17.12 K.

disgusting (αἰσχροός) and universally despised (διὰ παντός ἐπονεϊδιστος), but the money that comes from art is free (ἐλευθέριος), respectable (ἔνδοξος) and reliable (βέβαιος) (*Protr.* 8, 98.2-5 B. = I.17.14-17 K.). That helps Galen exhort young men to look in the mirror and try to make their inner morality as beautiful as their outward appearance.<sup>82</sup> Here Galen is assuming the Socratic persona, as the same counsel is pronounced by Socrates himself notably in 141D of Plutarch's *Precepts of Marriage*.<sup>83</sup> By neglecting their souls, human agents are only worthy of being spat upon, as the exemplum of the Cynic Diogenes suggests.<sup>84</sup> Galen filters this through his own protreptic voice:

So, young man, do not allow yourself to become worthy of being spat at, even if you think that everything else about you is splendid.<sup>85</sup> *Protr.* 8, 99.16-18 B. = I.19.13-15 K.

It is important to discuss Galen's authority in the context of his exhortation. His address to young men is informed by a provocatively extravagant, almost paternal, tone: 'Come then, my children, you who having heard my words have launched yourselves on an education in the arts' (Ἄγετε οὖν, ὦ παῖδες, ὅπόσοι τῶν ἐμῶν ἀκηκοότες λόγων ἐπὶ τέχνης μάθησιν ὠρμησθε, *Protr.* 9, 100.1-2 B. = I.20.4-5 K.), which eventually becomes so insistent as to allow little freedom of choice to the young men. This address provides the audience with a sense of security that Galen's advice will not only protect them against charlatans but to a large extent direct them towards the practice of those arts that are beneficial to life.<sup>86</sup> Both the appellations Galen uses above (μειράκια and παῖδες)<sup>87</sup> and the insistent urging to progress to the liberal arts point to the fact that this work is addressed to adolescents around 14 years old, who are about to finish or

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *De Mor.* 43 Kr., where physical illness and ugliness correspond to illness and ugliness of the soul.

<sup>83</sup> Ὁ Σωκράτης ἐκέλευε τῶν ἐσοπτριζομένων νεανίσκων τοὺς μὲν αἰσχροὺς ἐπανορθοῦσθαι τῇ ἀρετῇ, τοὺς δὲ καλοὺς μὴ καταισχύνειν τῇ κακίᾳ τὸ εἶδος. Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.19: μειρακίου δὲ περιεργότερον παρά τὴν ἡλικίαν ἐρωτῶντος ζητημά τι, προσήγαγε πρὸς κάτοπτρον καὶ ἐκέλευσεν ἐμβλέψαι· ἔπειτ' ἠρώτησεν εἰ δοκεῖ αὐτῷ ἀρμόττοντα εἶναι ὄψει τοιαύτη τοιαῦτα ζητήματα, and Stobaeus 2.31.98: Σωκράτης παρήγει τοῖς νέοις πολλακίς ἐσοπτριζεσθαι καὶ τοὺς μὲν εὐπρεπεῖς ὅμοιον ποιεῖν τῷ εἶδει καὶ <τὸν> τρόπον, τοὺς δὲ ἀμόρφους περιστέλλειν τὸ δυσειδὲς τῇ εὐτροπίᾳ. The recipients of the advice are in both cases young men. On how Galen is influenced by Socratism in the *Exhortation*, see Rosen (2009: 157-159).

<sup>84</sup> *Protr.* 8, 99.1-16 B. = I.18.15-19.13 K. with multiple occurrences of ἐπτυσεν, προσέπτυσε, ἀποπτύειν.

<sup>85</sup> μὴ τοῖνυν ἐάσης, ὦ μειράκιον, ἄξιον τοῦ προσπτύεσθαι γενέσθαι σεαυτὸν, μηδ' ἂν ἅπαντά σοι τᾶλλα κάλλιστα διακεῖσθαι δοκῇ.

<sup>86</sup> *Protr.* 9, 100.2-6 B. = I.20.5-9 K. <sup>87</sup> On age groups in Galen, see Boudon-Millot (2014).

have just finished their primary education and will now move into general, secondary education (*enkyklios paideia*)<sup>88</sup> – a preliminary to any activity in life – with a view to taking up higher studies that will help them secure a noble profession in life, such as medicine.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, Galen also works on the intellectual state of his young readers by subtly putting across the idea to them that the various forms of athletic activity differ from the arts. This he achieves by assuring them that he himself believes in their capacity for discernment<sup>90</sup> and also by warning them that they need some additional instruction on the crucial issue of athletics.<sup>91</sup> The first section is rounded off in the form of a ring composition with a recapitulatory passage on man's relationship to gods and animals respectively. However repetitive this might seem to modern tastes, it illustrates the authoritative voice of the author, who communicates his ethical teachings assertively and in plain language, with blunt analogies and conditional clauses, meant to ensure universal applicability to his collective readership of young men:

The human race, my children, has something in common with the gods and the irrational beasts; with the former to the extent that it is possessed by reason, with the latter to the extent that it is mortal. It is better then to realise our kinship with the greater of these and to take care of education, by which we may attain the greatest of goods, if we apply it successfully, and, if unsuccessfully, at least we will not suffer the shame of being inferior to the most idle beasts.<sup>92</sup> *Protr.* 9, 101.2-9 B. = I.21.4-10 K.

<sup>88</sup> *Enkyklios paideia* refers to a programme of intermediate/secondary education (following on from the primary stage of education that included reading and writing), which provided preparatory studies for the various branches of higher culture. After the second half of the 1st c. BC, this programme became more systematised and included the seven liberal arts, normally grammar, rhetoric and dialectic (later known as the *trivium*), and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and harmonics (the *quadrivium*), although with some degree of flexibility depending on the special interests of each author. Higher/professional learning traditionally included philosophy, rhetoric, medicine, architecture and other fields. See Clarke (1971: 1-2, 109-118) and Morgan (1998: 33-39).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Curtis (2014: 43-44), who makes the point that these appellations directed at young men stress Galen's pedagogical role more than the actual age group of his intended audience.

<sup>90</sup> 'I am sure that you are well aware that none of these is an art', *Protr.* 9, 100.6-8 B. = I.20.9-10 K.

<sup>91</sup> 'The only thing that worries me is athletics.' *Protr.* 9, 100.11-12 B. = I.20.13-14 K.; 'There is a danger that it may deceive some young men into supposing it an art. We had best investigate it then; deception is always easy in anything of which one has made no previous investigation', *Protr.* 9, 100.16-101.2 B. = I.21.1-4 K.

<sup>92</sup> τὸ δὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος, ὃ παιῖδες, ἐπικολί<νω>νεῖ θεοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις, τοῖς μὲν, καθ' ὅσον λογικόν ἐστι, τοῖς δέ, καθ' ὅσον θνητόν. βέλτιον οὖν ἐστὶ τῆς πρὸς τὰ κρείττονα κοινωνίας αἰσθανόμενον ἐπιμελήσασθαι παιδείας, ἣς τυχόντες μὲν τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔξομεν, ἀποτυχόντες δ' οὐκ αἰσχυνόμεθα τῶν ἀργοτάτων ζῶων ἐλαττούμενοι.



The exhortatory register in Galen differs from the mild didactic spirit of Plutarch, especially by comparison with the latter's two main educational essays, *On Listening to Poetry* and *On Listening to Lectures*. Although on the whole all three works address the same concerns about the character development of young people about to embark on their philosophical studies, Plutarch is more philosophical than rhetorical and does not fail to theorise *inter alia* about the philosophical significance of silence, the role of envy or the power of self-exploration.<sup>93</sup> Galen's rhetorical exuberance, by contrast, directs the reader in a more robust manner, presumably in order to signal more compellingly the need for philosophical engagement. The difference in tone may also tell us something about the authors' public profiles as perceived by their respective contemporaries or even about the way they wished to be seen by them. Unlike Plutarch, who was well known for having taught philosophy all his life both in Greece and in Rome, Galen was primarily respected as a physician or at best – according to him – as a physician-cum-philosopher. Could Galen's exuberant rhetoric (partly) hint at his ambitions to become a philosophical luminary in the area of practical ethics?

### The dangers of athletics

I now turn to the second part of the essay (chapters 9–14) to show that here Galen inserts even more manipulative material than the merely protreptic sort we have seen in the [previous section](#), and consequently that his tone becomes polemical rather than demonstrative. The author appears to follow the typical division of the protreptic into one section that demonstrates the value of philosophy, education and the arts (ἐνδεικτικόν) and another that refutes inimical arguments against them (ἀπελεγκτικόν).<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, in this second part of the *Exhortation*, instead of testing the validity of the accusations against the arts, Galen

<sup>93</sup> Plutarch's educational essays and Galen's *Exhortation* have many ideas in common: the contrast between useful and pleasurable (*On Listening to Poetry* 14D-F), the mixture of philosophical material with mythical narrations so as to make them more attractive to young people (*On Listening to Poetry* 15F), amending (*epanorthōsis*) poetical lines (*On Listening to Poetry* 20E-21D), praise and blame (*On Listening to Poetry* 27E-F), the role of eugenics (*On Listening to Poetry* 28D), differences between various groups of people and nations (*On Listening to Poetry* 28F-30E), the notion that the gods do not honour wealthy and powerful men but rather the just ones (*On Listening to Poetry* 30F), the imagery of horse and rider (*On Listening to Poetry* 31D) and the helmsman (*On Listening to Poetry* 33F), condemning nobility, riches, beauty and fame (*On Listening to Poetry* 32F, 33C-D, 34A, 34D-36A), what depends on luck (*On Listening to Poetry* 35C) and the contrast between humans and wild animals (*On Listening to Lectures* 38D).

<sup>94</sup> Hartlich (1889: 302); cf. Calderini and Ginevra (1986: 75–80).

demolishes the claims of alternative ideas of success and distinction. More specifically, he levels an attack against hypermasculinity and athletics and rebukes the reader for succumbing to any such wrong choices.<sup>95</sup> These new topics of discussion have important repercussions for his overarching argument on the practicability and value of ethical philosophy, especially in that they help clarify his view on the attention that should be paid to the care of the soul as opposed to giving excessive attention to the body.

On another level, Galen's discussion of extreme physical exercise reflects and indeed critically responds to the important part athletics played as a cultural and philosophical field by the second century AD.<sup>96</sup> Some Imperial-period philosophers tended to advocate the inclusion of gymnastics in the liberal curriculum,<sup>97</sup> emphasising its benefits for the soul, but in the *Exhortation* Galen favours medicine at the expense of gymnastics, considering the former an ideal guarantor of physical and mental health, a view that fitted his conceptualisation of medicine as a philosophising area of study and practice. Galen's attack on athletics has been rightly interpreted as an effective way for him to valorise medicine as an educational discipline in the contemporary health marketplace and consolidate its place in the intellectual setting of the High Roman Empire, thus demarcating his profession from that of athletic trainers, who were men of low educational and social status.<sup>98</sup> That may well be right, but, as I hope to show, his promotion of medicine must surely be linked to its potential as a social, moralising vocation too.

Abandoning the sociative 'we' and assuming the second person indicative or imperative form of address, Galen commences a rejection of athletics in so far as it interferes not so much with the care of the body as with care of the soul. He holds that the most excellent men attract divine praise not for their physical competence but their artistic accomplishments (*Protr.* 9, 101.12-17 B. = I.21.13-22.3 K.), providing the examples of Socrates, Lycurgus and Archilochus who were all praised by

<sup>95</sup> König (2005: 292-300) explains the disjunction between the work's two parts.

<sup>96</sup> König (2005: 254-300) analyses Galen's texts on physical training, including the *Exhortation*, to show how choosing athletics acts as a defining mirror image for medicine. On Galen's foregrounding of the self and his various levels of sophistication, see Barton (1994: 144-147). On athletics and the Second Sophistic, see van Nijf (2008: 203-224); cf. Singer (2014b: 983-984 and 987-993) specifically on Galen's attack against athletic trainers.

<sup>97</sup> E.g. Maximus of Tyre, *Oration* 37.3 in Trapp's edition. Cf. Philostratus's *On Gymnastics* 45, where athletic trainers are accused of corrupting the morals of athletes.

<sup>98</sup> Curtis (2014: 46-50). His 2014 study is a shorter version of pages 80-105 of his unpublished PhD thesis entitled 'Rhetorical strategies and generic conventions in the Galenic corpus' (2009). On athletics specifically in relation to elite self-fashioning, see van Nijf (2001).

Apollo. In corroboration of this statement Galen interjects a direct aside which is designed to eliminate any hesitation on the reader's part: 'If you do not wish to listen to me, at least have some respect for the Pythian Apollo' (εἰ δ' οὐκ ἐθέλεις ἐμοὶ πειθεσθαι, τὸν γε θεὸν αἰδέσθητι τὸν Πύθιον, *Protr.* 9, 101.21-22 B. = I.22.6-7 K.). Galen's imposing voice taps into his reader's religious sensibilities, and a bit further on he accuses the reader of succumbing to popular opinion and going along with the praise of the crowd (*Protr.* 10, 102.14-17 B. = I.23.3-5 K.), an accusation that seems to be a *topos* in protreptics.<sup>99</sup>

In continuing his criticism, Galen asks how the reader can arrogantly set himself up as an arbiter of important matters, going against the judgment of men wiser than himself,<sup>100</sup> all of whom have condemned physical training. He elects to quote their opinions, accompanying them with various grammatical forms of the verb *akouein*.<sup>101</sup> This serves Galen's philosophical aims, because, as we have seen, it can be used in the sense of rationally processing what is being heard after dismissing superficial impressions. It is used in this way in educational contexts, where it can be translated as 'to consider', as in this case.

Plutarch's *On Listening to Poetry* is again a good *comparandum* not just in respect of stressing the importance of *akouein* in the training of young men, but also in that it tackles issues relating to literary criticism, specifically referring to the correlation between poetry and philosophy. In contrast to Plato's celebrated rejection of poetry on the grounds that it inculcated immorality in young readers, Plutarch adopted its study in his educational agenda, regarding it as a preparatory stage leading into the realm of philosophy.<sup>102</sup> Galen not only seems aware of the tension between poetry and philosophy but also somehow revises this tradition, comparing the two fields on the basis of their opposition to athletics

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Iamblichus *Protr.* 6, 40 Pistelli: 'Indeed it is a servile or brutal manner of living, but not of living well, for one to eagerly desire and follow the opinions of the multitude of mankind, but to be altogether unwilling to imitate the industry and toil of the same multitude by seeking real wealth, the things which are truly beautiful.' (transl. Johnson in Neuville and Johnson 1988).

<sup>100</sup> *Protr.* 10, 103.2-5 B. = I.23.11-13 K.

<sup>101</sup> ἀκουσον οὖν ὅπως Εὐριπίδης φρονεῖ περὶ τῶν ἀθλητῶν ('Consider Euripides's opinion of athletes'), *Protr.* 10, 103.6-7 B. = I.23.14-15 K.; ὅτι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδευομένων αὐτοῖς ἕκαστον ἄχρηστον ἐστιν, ἄκουε πάλιν ... ('He has something to say, too, about the usefulness of their individual practices. Listen to this: ...'), *Protr.* 10, 103.17-18 B. = I.24.8-9 K.; εἰ δὲ καὶ τούτων ἔτι λεπτομέρεστερον ἀκουεῖν ἐθέλεις, ἄκουε πάλιν ... ('Or consider, if you will, this even subtler pronouncement ...'), *Protr.* 10, 104.4-5 B. = I.24.13-14 K.

<sup>102</sup> Xenophontos (2010). Love of truth is a staple in Galen's self-characterisation in many other works including the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, *Prognosis* and *Therapeutic Method*, as we will see in subsequent Chapters.

(though of course still prioritising philosophy over poetry). In fact, Galen's treatment is all the more anchored, given that he is conveying the opinion of medicine too, which also condemns athletics, as the quotations from Hippocrates attest.<sup>103</sup>

Galen's use of accumulated testimonies from various authorities (especially poetic ones) to argue against athletics, although permissible in morally didactic settings in antiquity, is cast in the text as being at variance with Galen's authorial principles, since he is anxious to state that he was compelled to resort to such 'mean activities' (φαῦλον . . . ἐπιτήδευμα) so as to benefit those yielding to the vacuities of popular reputation.<sup>104</sup> We have already remarked that Galen employs the argument of 'compulsion' when he wants to excuse his denunciation of the moral debasement of others, which often provokes him to respond in self-contradictory ways (Chapter 3). So here too, Galen justifies his use of authorities that distract him from his philosophical role, rendering him a rhetor,<sup>105</sup> by stressing his commitment to the moral incitement of his audience.<sup>106</sup> Such self-apologetics also probably reveal a concern that he may appear more rhetorical than necessary, a common preoccupation of many moral philosophers and a fear Galen also expresses in other works.

In claiming that athletes are totally ignorant of the existence of their souls, busying themselves with flesh and blood matters, Galen depicts them as extinguishing their capacity for contemplation and descending to the level of irrational animals.<sup>107</sup> Identifying athletes with pigs in particular<sup>108</sup> is a technique which helps Galen to relate what he had previously described as the non-rational nature of athletes' souls to animal behaviour.<sup>109</sup> This brings to mind the similar passage in *Character Traits* (Chapter 1),<sup>110</sup> which equates physical preoccupations with the life of a pig and spiritual concerns with a divine existence. Interestingly, abstaining from immoderate vices, such as over-eating or over-drinking and over-indulgence in sexual intercourse, also becomes a crucial part of the profile of the philosophically minded physician in *The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher* (e.g. *Opt. Med.* 290.2-7 Boudon-Millot = I.59.11-15 K.). Galen's moral narratives clearly compartmentalise virtuous lifestyles, separating them from immoral ones.

<sup>103</sup> *Protr.* 10, 104.10-19 B. = I.25.2-10 K.      <sup>104</sup> *Protr.* 10, 104.18-105.4. B. = I.25.9-16 K.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *PHP* 3.3, 192.3-6 DL = V.310.8-12 K.      <sup>106</sup> *Protr.* 10, 104.20 B. = I.25.11 K.

<sup>107</sup> *Protr.* 11, 106.1-11 B. = I.26.17-27.9 K.      <sup>108</sup> *Protr.* 11, 107.15-108.4 B. = I.28.14-29.2 K.

<sup>109</sup> For the analogy's satirical and comic connotations, see Rosen (2010: 334-337).

<sup>110</sup> *De Mor.* 37 Kr.

Another important aspect in Galen's exposition in respect of his construction of authority is the relationship he builds between himself and Hippocrates. The abundant Hippocratic quotations in the second section of the essay are not just back-up from an ancient thinker, reinforcing Galen's medical arguments. Rather they lend persuasiveness to his personal views. That is reflected in the fact that Galen is careful not just to cite but above all to comment on and challenge some of the Hippocratic aphorisms, which ultimately makes a very strong impression.<sup>111</sup> This is apparent in his use of pertinent vocabulary describing the physical symptoms of an athletic regime<sup>112</sup> and in the exposition of the mechanics of the body. That said, this part of the treatise does not get bogged down with any medical trifles, not even deploying any technical terms from physiology, which might confound the inexperienced reader. In chapter 11 for example, Galen provides the reader with a straightforward clarification to explicate a Hippocratic aphorism that involves the distinction between the state and the condition of the body.<sup>113</sup> This indicates that the audience do not yet have any medical background or familiarity with the Hippocratic corpus; otherwise such explanations would have been redundant. That also ties in with Galen's working method in the *Exhortation* and elsewhere of carefully adjusting his material to the level of his readers. As he makes clear in a passage in *My Own Books*, introductory texts cannot be thorough or comprehensive in character, given that beginners fail to comprehend the niceties of the disquisition before first acquainting themselves with the basics (*Lib. Prop.* Prol. 10-11, 136.9-16 Boudon-Millot = XIX.10.18-11.6 K.).<sup>114</sup> This rationale is applied in the *Exhortation* too, where Galen's protreptic discourse purposefully omits any hard-core stuff on moral analysis and stays with the simpler hortatory material, as has been observed in the course of this Chapter.

<sup>111</sup> *Protr.* 11, 108.5-14 B. = I.29.2-12 K.: "The old master, Hippocrates, apart from the lines already quoted, also says this: "Great and sudden changes are dangerous: filling or emptying, heating or cooling, or moving the body in any other way". For – he adds – "all large quantities are inimical to Nature (*Aphorisms* ii.51) . . ." I would say, in fact, that athletics is the cultivation, not of health, but of disease. . . . On Galen as a commentator on Hippocrates, see e.g. Manetti and Roselli (1994), Flemming (2008).

<sup>112</sup> *Protr.* 11, 109.15-21 B. = I.31.2-7 K.

<sup>113</sup> 'By this he (i.e. Hippocrates) does not just mean that athletic practice destroys what is natural; he even uses the word 'state', refusing it the name 'condition', which is always applied by the ancients to the truly healthy. A condition is a stable state which is not readily changed; that of athletes is a peak, and is dangerous and liable to change', *Protr.* 11, 108.16-23 B. = I.29.13-30.2 K.

<sup>114</sup> Galen readjusts his emphases to the level of his audience very frequently, e.g. 'The substance which governs plants, when I converse with the Platonist philosophers, I call 'soul', just as he [i.e. Plato] did, but when I converse with the Stoics, [I call it] 'nature', just I do when I address average people', *Prop. Plac.* 3, 100.35-102.37 PX.

By referring to the athletes' physical deformities, Galen subverts the notion of their beauty, arguing that their bodily strength is of no significant value other than helping them to perform agricultural activities.<sup>115</sup> The sarcastic tone progresses into a compelling assertion that the athletes' resistance to extreme weather makes them like newborn babies,<sup>116</sup> and he mocks them for lying all day long in dust and washing in muck.<sup>117</sup> Such polemical comments are meant to undermine the self-esteem of athletes and, in order to conclude that athletics are of no use in any practical context in human life, Galen deploys a didactic myth in verse which preaches that athletic distinction is, in fact, not an accomplishment for humans but for animals.<sup>118</sup> This polemical framework reinforces Galen's concluding thesis that athletics should not even be a way of earning a living<sup>119</sup> and so he classifies it in the category of the less-respected banausic arts, unlike medicine which is one of the higher arts, i.e. the ones that can mitigate the bestiality of the soul.<sup>120</sup> This final remark in the surviving part of the essay shows the ethical dimensions that Galen credits to medicine so as to demonstrate its right to be considered an elevated art. Thus, by urging the reader to adopt a well-defined cluster of habits in relation to the care of body and soul, he corroborates his role as physician but also as a moral mentor for his contemporaries.

### Ethics in the *Exhortation* and in texts focusing on the mechanics of the body

The best constitution of the human body and its hygiene and physical exercise are vital issues in Galen's naturalistic thought, which he discusses in a group of technical works.<sup>121</sup> In this section, I would like to explore

<sup>115</sup> *Protr.* 13, 111.8-14 B. = I.32.13-16 K.      <sup>116</sup> *Protr.* 13, 112.3-7 B. = I.33.9-13 K.

<sup>117</sup> *Protr.* 13, 112.11-15 B. = I.33.16-34.2 K.

<sup>118</sup> Crusius (1884) suggested that these hexameters come from a lost work of Plutarch, 'The catalogue of Lamprias' no. 127 with title *Περὶ ζώων ἀλόγων ποιητικός*; compare Gercke (1886: 470-472), who advances certain objections to Crusius's arguments; see also Bergk (1846: 117-118), who attributes the song to Xenophanes instead.

<sup>119</sup> *Protr.* 14, 116.20-117.1 B. = I.38.9-12 K.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *De Mor.* 44 Kr. on the sciences reforming the soul. On the classification of the arts in Galen, see Rodríguez-Moreno (2020: 208-222). The contradiction between the end and function of the so-called stochastic arts, including medicine, gave rise to heated debates in Galen's time; on how Galen and his contemporary and rival Alexander of Aphrodisias (2nd c. AD) explain this contradiction, see Ierodiakonou (1995). Pollux's *Onomasticon* (2nd c. AD) is full of references to the contemporary debate on the distinction between banausic and liberal arts. Cf. Mazzini (2014: 79-80). See also Maximus of Tyre's *Oration* 37.41-55.

<sup>121</sup> On Galen's attitude towards physical exercise, see Barraud (1938). Also Schlange-Schöningen (2003: 127-133). See also Chapter 2.

briefly some cases of material common both to these works and the *Exhortation* in an attempt to illuminate Galen's moralising twists in the latter and further stress how his ethical pronouncements require subtle transformations in order to resonate with his young audience and the requirements of his philosophical exposition.

The first example comes from the short essay *Good Condition*. Here Galen examines the definition of 'good condition' in cases where reference is made to an individual's nature, suggesting that one should always add the name of the person, for instance 'Dion's good condition' or 'Milo's good condition'.<sup>122</sup> Milo of Croton was a well-known wrestler of the sixth century BC (considered a follower of Pythagoras), whom Galen compares in this context to Hercules and Achilles, both representing positive cases of good condition in the unqualified sense. However, subsequently he twice adduces the authority of Hippocrates to warn against extreme bodily states: 'Among people who take gymnastic exercise, the extremes of good condition are dangerous' and 'The athletic state is not natural; better the healthy condition'.<sup>123</sup> Both of these Hippocratic statements each occur twice in the *Exhortation*,<sup>124</sup> and Hercules too is used here as a positive model of physical resilience (*Protr.* 13, 112.3-7 B. = 1.33.9-13 K.). In the *Exhortation*, however, the figure of Milo is treated in the most negative fashion, as Galen devotes a remarkable amount of space to showing that Milo's physical achievements were a manifestation of incredible stupidity (ὦ τῆς ὑπερβολοῦσης ἀνοίας, *Protr.* 13, 112.17-18 B. = 1.34.5 K.), linked to the hero's servile sacrifice of his soul (*Protr.* 13, 112.15-114.4 B. = 1.34.3-35.11 K.), which Galen calls 'worthless' (οὐδενὸς ἦν ἄξια, at *Protr.* 13, 113.4 B. = 1.34.9-10 K.). Moreover, Galen depicts Milo as devoid of rationality, making his approach to life appear useless by comparison with Themistocles's wisdom.<sup>125</sup> Those reconfigurings evince Galen's moralising input in his *Exhortation*, a text concerned with distancing its young readers from an excessive preoccupation with the body.

<sup>122</sup> Galen, *Bon. Hab.* 17.15-16 Helmreich = 106.21-22 Bertini Malgarini = IV.751.13-15 K.

<sup>123</sup> Galen, *Bon. Hab.* 17.22-18.10 Helmreich = 106-108 Bertini Malgarini = IV.752.4-14 K. Translations from Singer (1997).

<sup>124</sup> From [Hipp.] *Aphor.* I, 3, 18, IV.99 Jones = IV.458.13 L. at Galen, *Protr.* 11, 106.15-16 B. = 1.27.13-14 K. and *Protr.* 11, 108.22-23 B. = 1.30.1-2 K. From [Hipp.] *De alim.* 34, 82.21-22 Heiberg = 145.2-3 Joly = IX.110.11-13 L. at Galen, *Protr.* 10, 104.15-16 B. = 1.25.7-8 K. and *Protr.* 11, 108.15-16 B. = 1.29.12-13 K.

<sup>125</sup> The *chreia* about Milo seems to be a famous one, occurring, *inter alios*, also in Cicero's *On Old Age* 10.33, Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* 1.10, Aelian's *Various History* 12.22 and 14.47b, and Lucian's *Charon* 8.

Galen's interest in depicting physical exercise through an ethical lens is also seen in *The Exercise with the Small Ball*, where again the degree of moralising is restrained by comparison with the *Exhortation*. This essay is addressed to Epigenes, a man of superlative physical condition, to whom our author proposes the most superior kind of physical activity, i.e. exercise with the small ball. The precise nature of this sport is unclear,<sup>126</sup> but it is telling that Galen embraces it because it does not just exercise the body, but above all delights the soul.<sup>127</sup> Elsewhere, he stresses that this form of exercise assists both body and soul to achieve their respective best state,<sup>128</sup> a recurrent motif in the essay, which eventually confirms the soul's superiority over the body.<sup>129</sup> By contrast, Galen condemns wrestling on the grounds that it renders the intellect idle and sleepy, promoting body-building rather than the cultivation of virtue.<sup>130</sup> In this connection, Galen claims that if one engages with wrestling, one's chances of a brilliant generalship or political power are minimal and that it would be better to assign such public duties to pigs than to wrestlers.<sup>131</sup> The material here echoes a certain passage from the second part of the *Exhortation* where, as we have seen, Galen remonstrates with athletes for their body-building on the grounds that it extinguishes their rational capacities and renders them pigs.<sup>132</sup>

Thus Galen reworks very similar material in the moral context of the *Exhortation* but in a manner that makes his argumentation more powerful, especially through the use of more direct condemnation devices. The retexturing patterns also show that Galen's value of philosophical moderation in relation to the care of the body is a principal feature of his moralising medicine, which controls all other types of bodily knowledge. That is quite clear, for instance, in his *Matters of Health*, a work dedicated

<sup>126</sup> Mendner (1959), Nickel (1976); for a description of the sport, see Wenkebach (1938: 275–279). See also Robinson (1955: 182–190) for other references to exercises with a ball such as Pollyx or Athenaeus; cf. Boudon-Millot (2015a), Pietrobelli (2020: 156–168). On the popularity of ball games in the Imperial period, see Harris (1972: 75–111).

<sup>127</sup> Galen, *Parv. Pil.* 1, I.93.10–12 Marquardt = V.899.10–900.1 K. For a rhetorical analysis of the work, see Gibson (2014).

<sup>128</sup> 'I praise especially the form or exercise which has the capacity to provide health of the body, harmony of the parts, and virtue in the soul . . . It is able to benefit the soul in every way' (Μάλιστα οὖν ἐπαινώ γυμνάσιον, ὃ καὶ σώματος ὑγείαν ἐκπορίζει, καὶ μερῶν εὐαρμοστίαν, καὶ ψυχῆς ἀρετὴν παρὰ τούτοις . . . καὶ γὰρ εἰς πάντα ψυχὴν δυνατὸν ὠφελεῖν), *Parv. Pil.* 3, I.97.7–11 Marquardt = V.906.14–907.1 K.

<sup>129</sup> Galen, *Parv. Pil.* 1, I.94.5–8 Marquardt = V.900.10–12 K.

<sup>130</sup> Galen, *Parv. Pil.* 3, I.98.8–12 Marquardt = V.905.10–13 K.

<sup>131</sup> Galen, *Parv. Pil.* 3, I.98.13–16 Marquardt = V.905.14–17 K.

<sup>132</sup> *Protr.* 11, 106.1–11 B. = I.26.17–27.9 K.; *Protr.* 11, 107.15–108.4 B. = I.28.14–29.2 K.



to hygiene but not free from moral overtones (Chapter 3). In a series of recommendations on physical health for adolescents, Galen again strikes a balance between lack of exercise and extreme gymnastics and emphasises how this balance impacts on a young man's character formation, ensuring both orderly behaviour (εὐκοσμία) and ready obedience (εὐπειθεῖα).<sup>133</sup>

Comparable retexturing patterns occur in another work concerned with the care of the body, namely *Thrasylulus: Is Healthiness a Part of Medicine or of Gymnastics?* As the work's title suggests, the topic under examination is very close to that addressed in the second part of the *Exhortation*, yet *Thrasylulus* is more of a technical work undermining the value of gymnastics via logical demonstration.<sup>134</sup> Galen's main thesis is that gymnastics is a perverted art, which has nothing to do with healthiness, concluding that it has justly attracted the contempt not only of Plato and Hippocrates but all other doctors and philosophers. Through vigorous interrogation, Galen eventually triumphs over his addressee, Thrasylulus, despite the latter's philosophical propensities and inquisitive spirit. The assertive imposition of authorial intent also provides the framework for the *Exhortation*, although to a completely different end, as we are dealing with Galen's moral didacticism towards a lay young audience here, not his promotion of logical practice for a group of intellectually advanced and demanding addressees.

### The work's contextual framework: Commodus attacked?

Before concluding, I would also like to discuss the contextual setting that may have inspired the composition of the *Exhortation* and provide a possible explanation for the polemic Galen launches against athletics in the second half of the tract. From the early years of his professional career, right back when he was appointed physician to the gladiators in Pergamum in ca. 157 AD, Galen appears to have been an ardent supporter of physical well-being and recovery.<sup>135</sup> Autobiographical descriptions show how upon moving to Rome he continued his own bodily care and devoted himself to wrestling until a severe injury in 164 AD obliged him to turn to less extreme forms of exercise.<sup>136</sup> The event in his career that may have made him reconsider the role of athletics might have been his personal

<sup>133</sup> *San. Tu.* 1.12, 28.22–31 Ko. = VI.60.8–18 K.

<sup>134</sup> On Galen's attitude to gymnastics in *Thrasylulus*, see Englert (1929: 53–66).

<sup>135</sup> *Comp. Med. Gen.* 3.6, XIII.599.3–601.18 K., in contrast to the inhumanity and immorality of the gladiatorial games in Seneca's *Letter 7* and *Letter 90*.

<sup>136</sup> Mattern (2013: 180–182).

supervision of the training of the young Commodus,<sup>137</sup> who, overwhelmed by Imperial wealth, his own beauty and bodily strength, resorted to the savagery of the Roman gladiatorial combats and despised the philosophical legacy of his high-minded father, Marcus Aurelius. The three factors that Galen castigates in his *Exhortation* as promoting the debased spirit of athletics, namely wealth, origin and beauty, are interestingly those that led to Commodus's eccentric participation in the arena, according to the contemporary historian Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 72.7.4).

Cassius's narration offers a lucid prosopography of Commodus that has striking similarities with Galen's portrait of the athletic man. As Cassius repeatedly states (*Hist. Rom.* 72.7.1, *Hist. Rom.* 72.18.3-4), his report was the result of what he had seen for himself, which makes us wonder whether Galen was an eyewitness to the same events, especially in light of the affinities we notice between the two accounts. The Roman historian explains that Commodus became a slave to lustful and cruel habits due to his ignorance, which prevented him from living the good life (*Hist. Rom.* 72.1.1). Galen similarly condemns athletes for surrendering to bodily pleasures and ignoring the existence of their souls and the importance of moral virtues (*Protr.* 11, 106.1-7 B. = I.26.17-27.6 K., cf. *Protr.* 6, 91.16-22 B. = I.10.2-8 K.).<sup>138</sup> In describing Commodus's public combats with wild beasts and gladiators (*Hist. Rom.* 72.102-3), Cassius mentions that the emperor wished to be called a Roman Hercules, and statues were erected representing him as such (*Hist. Rom.* 72.15).<sup>139</sup> Drawing on the Commodus-Hercules propaganda that was pervasive in the late second century AD, in the *Exhortation* Galen refers derogatorily to the 'emulators of Hercules' (*Protr.* 13, 112.4 B. = I.33.9-10 K.), mocking specifically their physical feebleness (*Protr.* 13, 112.5-7 B. = I.33.1-13 K.). Driven by his eccentricity, Commodus used to enter the amphitheatre in the garb of Hermes, carrying the god's staff (*Hist. Rom.* 72.17.3-4, *Hist. Rom.* 72.19.4), and demanded that his reign be called the 'Golden Age' (*Hist. Rom.* 72.16.1). These details align with Hermes's role in the proem to the *Exhortation* and, if I am right in my suggestion that Galen is alluding to Commodus, then he is hinting at the emperor's deluded state of mind, given that his crimes set him apart from Hermes, who is the

<sup>137</sup> *Praen.* 9, 118.27-33 N. = XIV.650.9-15 K.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Herodian, *Roman History* 1.13.7-8, who also attributes Commodus's pleasure-seeking to his neglect of moral studies.

<sup>139</sup> Rothschild (2014: 183-185) discusses the political overtones of Galen's use of Hercules in *Avoiding Distress* by analysing Commodus's links to Hercules in the light of Cassius Dio and other sources (e.g. imagery on coins).

personification of virtue in Galen's account (*Protr.* 3, 87.7-9 B. = I.5.2-4 K.). Commodus's vice and depravity also dissociate him from the Golden Age, conventionally seen as a period of primitive wisdom and ethical righteousness.

Galen's criticism of athletes might therefore be seen as an allusive commentary on the misbehaviour of the young emperor, probably reflecting similar public responses,<sup>140</sup> and more generally on the elevated position that athletes enjoyed at his Imperial court. Galen's tacit approach is probably because he feared for his life amidst the ongoing turmoil and instability, since the *Exhortation* must have been written during the three-month reign of Pertinax (1 January 193 – 28 March 193 AD) that followed the assassination of Commodus, as Joseph Walsh suggests.<sup>141</sup>

On another level, Galen's acquaintance with Imperial athletics must have made him oppose the unnatural ways in which athletic coaches attempted to create strong bodies. It was often the case that trainers entered the territory of medicine without having the necessary medical skills or background. This might explain why Galen so strongly adduces the authority of Hippocrates in his polemic against athletics: it reflects his attempt to demarcate his genuine medical status from that of charlatans. It is also important how Galen's stance reflects contemporary cultural trends that associated the intense practice of athletics with a lowering of ethical standards. In the third century AD, Philostratus composed a manual for athletic coaches, which highlighted the pressing need for them to be knowledgeable about medicine, especially anatomy and eugenics, and at the same time to despise corruption, in line with the old system of gymnastics that produced praiseworthy men such as Milo and Hercules. Galen's *Exhortation* makes, as I have shown, a markedly moralising appeal to readers both in terms of direct admonition and of social critique. The latter is employed most prominently in *Recognising the Best Physician* and *Prognosis*, which I shall discuss in forthcoming Chapters.

## Conclusions

In one of his *Discourses* ('On rhetorical display', 3.23.33-38) Epictetus holds that the philosophical protreptic differs from epideictic oratory in

<sup>140</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 73.2.2-3: 'For no one called him Commodus or emperor; instead they referred to him as an accursed wretch and a tyrant, adding in jest such terms as "the gladiator", "the charioteer", "the left-handed", the "ruptured"'. The edition of Cassius Dio is that by Boissevain (1895-1901; repr. 1955).

<sup>141</sup> Walsh (1930: 521).

that it does not set out to give the audience pleasure but to expose their moral weaknesses, often in crude ways. The protreptic, he goes on, is the most suitable form of exhortation the philosopher can use to induce self-realisation. In this Chapter, I hope to have shown that Galen's *Exhortation* is not a conventional epideictic piece as Epictetus understood it,<sup>142</sup> but one in which rhetoric to a large extent facilitates philosophical instruction. As I have tried to show, the work abounds in educational elements, which are consistent with its more developed moralising by comparison with what we get in other works treating the mechanics of the body. We have also seen how Galen's authority imposes itself on what he expects to be an inexperienced, young audience in an attempt to initiate them into some of the tenets of philosophical training with a view to leading them to study medicine. This accounts for Galen's avoidance of theoretical and technical material, which is replaced by practical counsel instead. Here readers are not active agents as they are in *Avoiding Distress*, they are not informed of the personal testimonies of the Galenic narrator, nor do they enjoy any interpersonal relationship with their instructor as yet. The function of Galen's protreptic is less to develop independent thought than to arouse desire for imitation, eliminate erroneous impressions and provide safe choices to young people moving from literary and rhetorical studies to a philosophical education, ideally with a view to becoming physicians later.<sup>143</sup>

The Socratic protreptic entails elenctic admonition, Aristotle's (fragmentary) protreptic elaborates arguments and has a concluding peroration, Seneca's protreptic is an epistolary refutation of Posidonius, while that of Iamblichus is an anthology of protreptics in the form of exegesis. Galen's protreptic is of a different sort, not only in that it is an authoritative monologue verging on a traditional diatribe, but mostly because of its peculiar moralising rhetoric, which seems to cast a wide net, thus making it a public rather than an intimate piece. Its scope is also significant because of its close interplay with a large number of philosophical sources, not just the later Stoic tradition, represented by Posidonius and Seneca, but also with the Platonic and Aristotelian legacy, and most notably Plutarch. It is this richness and the diversity of Galen's treatment of moral issues that

<sup>142</sup> Such as, for example, pseudo-Dionysius of Halicarnassus's *Exhortation to Athletes* (283.20–292 Usener-Rademacher).

<sup>143</sup> Galen started his philosophical studies at the age of fourteen, Nutton (2013: 223). [Soranus], *Introduction*, II.244–245 Rose, recommends beginning medical education at the age of 15; see Drabkin (1944: 337), Carrier (2016: 34–36, 60–62). On medical education in antiquity, see Bannert (2015), Carrier (2016: 105–119); cf. Kudlien (1970a).

makes him stand out in ancient philosophical culture. The Lamprias catalogue, an ancient list of Plutarch's works, informs us that Plutarch himself produced two protreptics, *An Exhortation to Philosophy, Addressed to a Rich Young Man* (no. 207) and *An Exhortation to Philosophy, Addressed to Asclepiades of Pergamum* (no. 214), both of them lost. Attempting to prove that Galen's *Exhortation* drew on these two works must surely remain a matter of speculation, but, on the basis of the other close parallels shared between the two authors, I hope at least to have made attractive the possibility of Galen trying to enter the moral tradition that Plutarch inherited and enriched, and to enjoy (some of) the latter's popularity as a star moralist of the Graeco-Roman period. Even if Galen's closeness to Plutarch is not conscious or direct (which I think it is), it does have something to tell us about the former's sustained work in the area of moral philosophy and its envisaged impact on the contemporary philosophical and intellectual landscape.

*Affections and Errors of the Soul*

The *Affections and Errors of the Soul* has a prominent position among Galen's works on moral philosophy.<sup>1</sup> First of all, it is sufficiently extensive to illuminate the author's multifaceted moral agenda in what seems to be a popular philosophical treatise in the strict sense of the term. Moreover, it reveals a lot about the moral milieu of the second/third century AD, widening its scope from a particular ethical situation to cover such aspects as the sociology of moral passions and their aesthetic evaluation. In addition, it sheds light on the relationship between medicine and practical ethics through its focus on what I shall term 'ethical' case histories. Relatedly, it shows the intricate ways in which Galen, putting aside his medical role and assuming the persona of a moral practitioner, leverages standard ethical 'psychotherapeutics', at times simply pressing them into service and at others transforming them, to meet the moral needs of his audience and, of course, the principles of his ethical programme.

Previous discussions of this text have explored Galen's philosophical leanings or influences with reference to psychic affections and errors<sup>2</sup> or

<sup>1</sup> The conventional translation is a composite of the two separate titles of the two parts of the treatise, namely *The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Affections Peculiar to Each Person's Soul* (Book 1) (Περὶ διαγνώσεως καὶ θεραπείας τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκάστου ψυχῇ ἰδίῳ παθῶν) and *The Diagnosis and Treatment of the Errors of Each Person's Soul* (Book 2) (Περὶ διαγνώσεως καὶ θεραπείας τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐκάστου ψυχῇ ἁμαρτημάτων). For a general overview of the work, see Riese in Harkins (1963: 111–131) and Singer (2013: 205–236).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Gill (2010: 252–262) who, although he identifies some tropes common to Galen's *Affections and Errors of the Soul* and other writings on the therapy of the emotions, mainly discusses Galen's engagement with different intellectual traditions on ethical psychology. In Gill (2019: 137–138) he briefly turns to *Affections and Errors of the Soul* to address the question of coherence in Galen's philosophical approach to the therapy of emotions. Cf. Donini (2008: 194–202). Hankinson (1993) makes a philosophical analysis of Galen's concept of emotions in the context of other, especially Chrysippean, philosophical approaches. Donini (1988), on the other hand, focuses on Book 2 *On Errors*, exploring their typology and especially their relation to the ultimate goal of life (*telos*); while García Ballester (1988: esp. 137–147) deals with the concept of 'disease of the soul' partly in the light of the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*. Cf. Manuli (1988: 194–195), who briefly categorises passions

have used them as a springboard to a wider treatment of Galen's pathology of the soul.<sup>3</sup> Little has been done to foreground the work's moralising weight as outlined above or the authorial strategies employed to encourage readers to cultivate an ethical approach to life. The aim of this Chapter is to situate *Affections and Errors of the Soul* in the larger picture of Galen's practical philosophy and cast light on the special characteristics of his moral practice.

### Constructing the identity of a moral philosopher: Polemic, self-promotion and self-effacement in the proem

The *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, like the other extant moral pieces by Galen, was composed after 192 AD, the year marking Commodus's death, and it is divided into two books, the first one dealing with affections, the second with errors. This distinction reflects the text's main philosophical thesis that drives the argument from the outset, namely that errors (ἄμαρτήματα) result from the soul's rational part, being erroneous judgments, whereas affections (πάθη) spring from the non-rational part, every time it fails to subject itself to reason.<sup>4</sup>

in the same work and in relation to *PHP*, and Vegetti (1984) on Galen's soul theory particularly in connection with Platonic influences.

<sup>3</sup> Singer (2018) and Singer (2013: 205–232). Cf. Singer (2013: 18–33). Another strand of research by Linden (1999: 10–27) has looked at the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* to analyse the methodological foundations of Galenic ethics.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, Galen also concerns himself with this basic distinction and elucidates the concept of affection through a case study of Medea (following Chrysippus): although 'she understands how evil the acts are that she is about to perform, . . . her anger is stronger than her deliberations; that is, her affection has not been made to submit and does not obey and follow reason as it would a master, but throws off the reins and departs and disobeys the command, implying that it is the work or affection of some power other than the rational.' (*PHP* 4.2, 244.2–8 DL = V.372.7–15 K.); transl. De Lacy with minor alterations. On this passage and its philosophical context, see Gill (1998: 116–123). Even though the distinction between affections and errors has been made by Stoic theorists such as Chrysippus, as explained in *PHP* 4.2, 242.32–35 DL = V.371.15–372.3 K., Galen remains faithful to his Platonic and Aristotelian influences and does not essay any marrying between Stoic and Platonic/Aristotelian doctrines at this stage in the text. In his Book *On Errors*, he provides another good example of the distinction between affection and error: 'There, too, you may learn clearly in what way affection differs from error. One who takes it as a doctrine that human beings should perform good works, for example, on the grounds that performing such works for the benefit of others is a true goal, but then omits to undertake such assistance through sleep, laziness, love of pleasure or some such things, has made a mistake under the influence of affection. One who has decided only to provide pleasure or freedom from disturbance to himself, on the other hand, and for this reason refrains from coming to the assistance of fellow citizens or members of his household when they are being ill-treated, has committed an error which is due to faulty belief, not to affection', *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 52.13–53.8 DB = V.76.13–77.12 K.

One of the most salient features of the preface to the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* is the multiplicity of stages through which Galen builds up his authority in the realm of ethics. The work begins with a reference to the occasion for which the work was written. This takes the form of a micronarrative, whose components Galen tailors to present himself as an expert in the subject under investigation. Inspired by a common trope in writings on the therapy of the emotions, he introduces an anonymous, fictional addressee, who has supposedly requested a written note on the oral response Galen had made in public to his question about the *Control of One's Own Particular Affections* by Antonius the Epicurean. The constructed time and space in the micronarrative operate on two levels and suggest two interrelated things: the 'past moment' alongside the 'oral disquisition', on the one hand, imply that the addressee was a frequent participant in Galen's public lectures, thus inviting us to visualise Galen talking about ethics in front of large audiences. The 'present moment' and the 'written text', on the other hand, suggest Galen's success in the oral performance and hence justify the addressee's long-standing interest in Galen's ethical expositions, this time leading us to imagine Galen at his desk writing down<sup>5</sup> the philosophical substance of his lecture that his followers so ardently demanded.

Two further elements in the preamble buttress Galen's self-legitimacy and self-promotion. First, the recipient of the essay is never given a name, which points to the fact that he might represent a wider readership, thereby corroborating the impression we get from the text regarding Galen's popularity as a moral specialist. Second, we know nothing about Antonius or this specific work by him,<sup>6</sup> which might suggest that he was of lesser importance or reputation in antiquity than the successful Galen as delineated in the narrative so far.

In fact, Antonius's presence in the text is not without further significance. Galen sets up a critical dialogue with him, castigating in particular his inaccurate use of terminology: 'It would have been best if Antonius had himself stated clearly (εἰρηκέναι σαφῶς) what he means by the term "control" (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* I, 3.8-9 DB = V.1.5-7 K.) and further on 'It also became apparent, as you know (ὡς οἶσθα), that he [i.e. Antonius] was <confused> and unclear in his interpretations (ἄσαφῶς ἐρμηνεύων), <so

<sup>5</sup> Or, as usual, commissioning others to do so.

<sup>6</sup> On Antonius, see *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A798 and *EANS* A100. It has been mistakenly assumed (Harris, 2001: 121, n. 175) that this Antonius is the same person as the one mentioned in the title of the pseudo-Galenic *The Pulse, To Antonius (De Pulsibus ad Antonium)* (XIX.629-642 K.).



that > most of his statements are susceptible to conjecture rather than to clear understanding (νοῆσαι σαφῶς) (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* I, 3.11-13 DB = V.2.3-5 K.).<sup>7</sup> Here Galen enters the area of philosophical exegesis and takes on the role of a skilled commentator, whose duty is to decipher hidden meanings and provide clarity on philosophical notions of primary importance.<sup>8</sup> That is indeed his main activity in his commentaries on Hippocratic works, but also a basic trait of his scientific methodology and medical writing more broadly, encapsulated in his motto ‘clarity of exposition/instruction’ (σαφῆς διδασκαλία). That explains why Galen goes on to carefully define affections and errors, and why he maintains a tendency throughout this work (as elsewhere) to offer well-defined terms and classifications. Galen’s implication in the statements cited above is that, unlike himself, Antonius is a philosopher of ill repute, who has dealt ineffectively with the mastery of the passions. Through the subtle use of the aside ‘as you know’ (ὡς οἶσθα) Galen projects onto his addressee and implied audience his own perspective on Antonius’s minimal abilities.<sup>9</sup>

Galen’s criticism of Antonius’s deficient methodology progresses into a more robust polemic as the text unfolds.<sup>10</sup> Galen tells us that in the light of a primary reading of Antonius’s work, he thinks that by *ephedreia* Antonius might be referring to either surveillance (παράφυλακή) or diagnosis (διάγνωσις) or correction (ἐπανόρθωσις), but ends up admitting to complete bafflement. He also explains that his main issue with Antonius is that within the context of the same work he sometimes urges his readers (προτρέπειν) to realise their errors, while elsewhere he focuses on the diagnosis of individual errors, and at other points advises on how to abstain from them (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* I, 3.10-17 DB = V.2.1-9 K.). This division corresponds to some extent to the threefold typology of works of practical ethics, made up of protreptic, therapy and advice.<sup>11</sup> And, that being so, Galen’s condemnation of Antonius rests on the fact that the latter has made grand claims in the area of popular philosophy, which had led him

<sup>7</sup> Words within angle brackets are editorial conjectures adopted by De Boer 1937.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Galen’s *Hipp. Epid.* VI, I, 8, 29.34-30.4 WP = XVIIA.844.4-9 K.; *Ind.* 6, 66.1-2 PX; *Dig. Puls.* 4.3, VIII.959.3-5 K.; *Musc. Diss.* 19.2, 159.4-7 Debru-Garofalo = XVIII B.979.3-5 K.; *SMT* I.34, XI.442.1-11 K.; *Plen.* 10, 68.25-27 Otte = VII.569.18-570.2 K.; *Gloss.* proem. 148.16-24 Perilli = XIX.68.7-69.2 K.; cf. *Soph.* I, 80.5-8 Schiapparelli = XIV.585.6-8 K. On Galen’s exegetical practices, see e.g. Snyder (2013).

<sup>9</sup> In other works Galen is much more direct both in exposing the methodological flaw of his rival and in instructing readers to dismiss his claims to being an authority on the subject; see *Alim. Fac.* 2.59, 164.14-167.14 Wilkins = VI.645.1-648.11 K.

<sup>10</sup> On the rhetoric of polemic in Galen, see recently Petit (2018: 90-111). On polemics in Hippocratic medicine, see Asper (2015: 31-37).

<sup>11</sup> Singer (2013: 2017 with n. 10). See also Chapter 4.

indiscriminately to include all subcategories of practical ethics within the same work, resulting in the lack of clarity Galen accuses him of above. We might wonder how reprehensible such cross-fertilisation really was, especially in an age in which we now know generic classification was not as rigid as we once believed it to be.<sup>12</sup> Still, according to Galen, in Antonius's case this counts as a fatal mistake, which sanctioned his own attempts at producing a proper work on ethics. This seems to be a common Galenic move, as in *Anatomical Procedures* our author declares that he has penned this work as a response to Marinus's incomplete and obscure treatment of anatomical observations, which no other author had yet managed to improve upon (*AA* 2.2, 73.18-22 Garofalo = II.283.7-12 K.; *AA* 4.10, 263.7-10 Garofalo = II.470.12-16 K.).<sup>13</sup>

Galen ends his series of attacks on Antonius by making a direct comparison between himself and his rival, in which, in the mode of self-praise, he congratulates himself on making a clear distinction between affections and errors, something that Antonius had so obviously failed to do (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* I, 3.20-4.7 DB = V.2.11-3.5 K.). Antonius is out-matched, and so Galen now turns to the ancient philosophers who had composed therapeutic writings on moral passions (θεραπευτικὰ γράμματα τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς παθῶν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* I, 4.9 DB = V.3.6-7 K.), namely Chrysippus but also Aristotle, his followers and Plato before them.

Implying that Antonius was not well versed even in this long-standing psychotherapeutic tradition, Galen says that '[i]t would have been better to learn these things from these people [i.e. the earlier authorities], as I did' (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* I, 4.11-12 DB = V.3.9-10 K.). He therefore wins the day once more. However, this is the concluding section of the preface and, given its emphasis on his (progressively developed) egocentric image, I would argue that this final remark goes beyond Galen's antagonism to Antonius, in hinting at something crucial about his own relationship with his predecessors. Galen, in his usual mode of self-effacement, pretends to be merely a modest student of the ancients, whereas in reality he is himself producing a new ethical work to advance the ancient tradition. His close conversation with his precursors is not an open or fierce one as with Antonius, but it can still be suggestive of what he deemed to be his high philosophical achievements in the field of ethics.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> van der Eijk (1997b: esp. 89-93).

<sup>13</sup> Galen expresses similar views in connection with Lycus's and other authors' defective treatises on the dissection of the muscles, *AA* 4.10, 261.25-27 Garofalo = II.470.1-3 K.

<sup>14</sup> Pace Rosen (2011: 170), who takes Galen's statements in the preface at face value, and therefore argues that our author, being 'modest', 'made no special claims to originality in this treatise'. This is

To support this argument, I shall turn to an intriguing section which happens to be the concluding part of the second book *On Errors*, hence forming a kind of ring composition in Galen's programmatic strategy (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 65.16-68.18 DB = V.98.9-103.16 K.). Here Galen professes to despise philosophers who make rash declarations without using logical demonstration and criticises them for pretending to know the truth of things, when they are actually ignorant. In this context, he introduces a brief embedded narrative, in which he is not just the author and narrator, but also the protagonist. The story stages a debate on whether water is heavier than wood, very reminiscent of a Platonic discussion or of Plutarch's sympotic episodes in his *Table Talk*, to give a more contemporary counterpart. The other participants are two philosophers and an architect, all of whom Galen has outshone in philosophical rigour by the end of the account, thus preserving his standing as the leading character. What seems to equip Galen with philosophical impact is his unique grasp of all major theories on the issue of the cosmic void, including Peripatetic, Stoic and Epicurean explanations, unlike his competitors who cannot measure up to Galen's wide-ranging knowledge. Consequently, Galen's self-presentation as a distinguished philosopher rests on his self-assertion that he is an active discussant with second-century rivals as well as past intellectual authorities, as suggested in the conclusion of the proem to the Book on *Affections*.<sup>15</sup> That also ties in with Galen's independent views elsewhere that Second Sophistic authors should consider being heirs to a long tradition a great advantage (οὐ σμικρὸν ἦν πλεονέκτημα), as this puts them in a position to emulate that tradition and potentially surpass it.<sup>16</sup>

uncharacteristic of Galen's grandiose authorial personality, as evinced throughout his corpus. My argument also aligns with recent literature on Galen's self-effacing poses which are 'not incompatible with innovation'; see König (2017: 7) with further references in note 24.

<sup>15</sup> On this general tactic elsewhere in Galen, see Lloyd (2008), who examines 'Galen's use of his contemporaries and predecessors as foils in constructing his own position by way of contrasting it with theirs'.

<sup>16</sup> *Opt. Med.* 287.18-288.3 Boudon-Millot = I.57.3-9 K.: 'And yet the fact that we were born later than the ancients, and have inherited from them arts which they developed to such a high degree, should have been a considerable advantage (οὐ σμικρὸν ἦν πλεονέκτημα). It would be easy, for example, to learn thoroughly in a very few years what Hippocrates discovered over a very long period of time, and then to devote the rest of one's life to the discovery of what remains'; transl. Singer (1997). By the same token, in *Parv. Pil.* 1, I.1-7 Marquardt = V.899.4-9 K., very much like a modern scholar, Galen is determined to plug gaps in previous scholarship conducted by the best philosophers and doctors: 'Physical exercise, Epigenes, is of considerable importance for health. Its predominance over food was established in the past by the best philosophers and doctors; but the great superiority of the exercise with the small ball has not been sufficiently demonstrated by anyone. So it seems right to me to put down what I know on the subject'; transl. Singer (1997). Also in *Loc. Aff.* 1.1, 246.5-248.13 Gärtner = VIII.17.17-20.2 K., where Galen points out his predecessors' limited contributions to the diagnosis of affected parts and is determined to advance

The same credo shines through in an authoritative passage from *Therapeutic Method*, where Galen resolutely declares he has ironed out Hippocrates's shortcomings in analysis and exposition, comparing his feat to Trajan's impeccable road-building programme in Italy (*MM* 9.8, X.632.1-634.3 K.). Far from being a derivative replication of the past, antiquarianism provides serious opportunities for individual merit and impact.

The preface to the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, then, is intended to carve out a niche for Galen as a key figure in the area of popular philosophy. It reflects his 'anxiety of influence'<sup>17</sup> in relation to both current and earlier philosophical writers. We have seen that our author strategically presents the recipient of his essay as a follower of his philosophical talks and attentive enough to deliberate on ethical matters that he needed Galen's scientific contribution to ethics. The recipient is even depicted as maintaining an interest in Galen's oral accounts and requesting written records thereof, hence confirming Galen's accomplishments as a moral authority by comparison with earlier and contemporary philosophers. This picture is created in two ways in the text: through explicit criticism of Antonius and blatant self-advertisement, and by means of a less direct dialogue with the ancients, this time realised through a rhetoric of modesty.

### Genre and level of addressee

Before examining Galen's moralising approach in more detail, it would be helpful to briefly analyse the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* as a textual entity. I have already mentioned that this is a treatise belonging to the popular philosophical tradition of the Roman Imperial period, but the work itself provides further indications about its generic identity. First, it is made clear that the author is not interested in expounding the minutiae of an abstract psychopathology as in his *Character Traits*. This is obvious in chapter 6, where, in the context of a brief technical digression, Galen

this area, especially by clarifying the inaccuracies perpetrated by Archigenes's followers (e.g. *Loc. Aff.* 2.8, 330.25-336.13 Gärtner = VIII.92.7-96.19 K.). Similarly in *Caus. Symp.* 1.8, VII.145.17-146.8 K., Galen sets out to counterbalance the misinterpretations and inaccurate definitions of his forerunners, and in *Praes. Puls.* 2.1, IX.274.18-275.10 K. he claims to be marching into uncharted territory with his research on the diagnosis of the pulse. In *PHP* Galen asserts that unlike the ancients' brief and unclear work, he has authored lucid and full explanations of demonstration, *PHP* 2.3, 108.22-25 DL = V.219.2-6 K.

<sup>17</sup> Asper (2005: 31-36).

cross-references *Character Traits* as a fuller account of the soul's constitution and especially of the method of disciplining its two non-rational capacities (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 19.8-20.19 DB = V.26.17-29.15 K.). In addition, the psychological 'jargon' that Galen uses here is consistently glossed for the addressee's sake,<sup>18</sup> on the assumption that he has no prior familiarity with it. Galen does not even expect his recipient to be aware of the fact that the desiderative capacity, if uncontrolled, can turn into bodily lust (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 20.19-31 DB = V.29.15-30.3 K.). Consequently, the author is less concerned with communicating expert knowledge on ethics and more with offering moral admonition in order to incline his recipient towards a life of moderation. In view of the above, the scholarly argument about Galen's 'lexical poverty' in relation to the terminology of the *pathē*<sup>19</sup> is not justifiable, at least as regards his popular philosophical essays, if one bears in mind that the aims and character of this group of texts were primarily pragmatic and accessible, rather than theoretical and jargon ridden.

Secondly, the text also suggests that the addressee seeks hands-on tips on how to become virtuous, once he has acknowledged his moral flaws. This is evinced in Galen's remarks that this work is not a protreptic seeking to exhort people to virtue (οὐ γὰρ ἔστι προτρεπτικός ἐπ' ἀρετήν), but rather aims to show those who are already going in that direction the path by which they can attain it (ἀλλὰ τοῖς προτετραμμένοις ὑφηγητικός τῆς ὁδοῦ, καθ' ἣν ἄν τις αὐτὴν κτήσασατο, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 23.14-16 DB = V.34.5-7 K.). Galen's use of the sub-genre of the *hyphēgētikos* seems to conform both to the group of Platonic dialogues labelled as ὑφηγητικοί (useful for

<sup>18</sup> E.g. the terms 'desiderative' or 'discipline' in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 19.13-14 DB = 27.12-14 K. and *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 19.20-21 DB = V.28.4-5 K. respectively.

<sup>19</sup> Singer (2013: 8, 211) and Singer (2017: 188) following Manuli (1988): 'Galen seems uninterested in detailed description of emotions, considered in their own right, of the sort engaged in by some philosophers. Is his approach here in fact related to the phenomenon which we have been considering above, namely his insistence on physical correlates? In other words, is he only interested in soul affections that can . . . be analysed also in terms of what happens in the body?'. Galen might be indeed less vocal in his analysis of emotions in his moral and morally-themed corpus; however, as I have shown, it is not just the philosophical analysis of passions that needs to be considered, but the kind of discourse he employs to articulate his moral(ising) outlook. That he is not describing emotions at length does not necessarily mean that he is interested in their somatic correlates only, for this would effectively mean that he is sabotaging his entire production on moral philosophy. To my mind, the lack of analytical detail in the presentation of emotions *per se* in the moral works has to do with the character of the implied reader, and probably the actual reader as well – i.e. people who are themselves not very versed in a wide vocabulary for the emotions. See also n. 49 below. It could also stem from Galen's limited philosophical experience in this realm of study and writing. He is a newcomer in the intellectual market of practical philosophy. He wants to make his trademark in this field, though he is not always successful.

guidance), as opposed to ἀπορητικοί or ζητητικοί (i.e. enabling investigation);<sup>20</sup> and partly to the notion that the ὑφηγητικός can take the ἠθικός as its practical example.<sup>21</sup> Galen's work is therefore targeted at those who are aware of their need for moral development and have consciously opted for it (τοῖς βουλευθεῖσιν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 24.3-4 DB = V.35.1-2 K.).<sup>22</sup> *Boulēsis* (volition) is of special interest, as it verges on prohairetic choice, indicating the agent's determination to achieve emotional equanimity. In this and similar contexts, however, it also points to Galen's conceptualisation of moral philosophy as being useful to and achievable by everybody who wishes to exercise it, a notion stressing the universal attainability of moral wellbeing proclaimed in *My Own Opinions*.<sup>23</sup> The necessity for self-knowledge on this self-conscious course is developed at length in chapter 2, to which I now turn.

### Self-knowledge vs self-love

This section explores how the agents' self-love obstructs their self-knowledge, with Galen frowning upon egotists who are unable to understand what they are doing wrong. One way to persuade his readers of the importance of the point he is making is by introducing his personal experience of the phenomenon through the use of verbs of vision and observation (ὄρωμεν, 'we see'; παμπόλλην ἔσχηκα πείραν, 'I have had a great deal of experience'; ἔθεασάμην, 'I have observed', ἑώρακα, 'I have seen', all featuring in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 4.17-25 DB = V.3.16-4.7 K.). This recalls the stress Galen places on personal experience as a means of validating his ethical authority in other moral works (*Avoiding Distress*, chapter 4). But it also helps demonstrate Galen's individual input into the discussion of self-love compared with how the topic was conducted by other thinkers in earlier antiquity. In adopting the well-known quote from Plato 'the lover is blind regarding the loved one'<sup>24</sup> (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 6.7-9

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Proclus, *In Plat. Parmenidem*, Book 1, 631.3-4 Cousin.

<sup>21</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 3.49.

<sup>22</sup> Menghi (1984: 14) is therefore right to speak of the propaedeutic character of the essay. This does not mean that Galen excludes any advice targeted at even less experienced moral agents. For example, he often distinguishes between admonishment appropriate to 'beginners' (τοῖς ἀρχομένοις) and 'those who are in training' (τοὺς ασκοῦντας), e.g. *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 23.19-23 DB = V.34.11-15 K. See also *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 21.19-22.2 DB = V.31.10-16 K.

<sup>23</sup> καὶ τὴν ἠθικὴν φιλοσοφίαν, ἣν ἐγὼ φημι χρησίμην τε ἕμα καὶ δυνατὴν εἶναι πᾶσι τοῖς βουλομένοις ἀσκήσαι ('moral philosophy is both useful and attainable by all those who wish to practise it'), *Prop. Plac.* 14, 136.20-22 PX.

<sup>24</sup> τυφλοῦται γὰρ περὶ τὸ φιλούμενον ὁ φιλῶν, *Laws* 731e5-6. Galen also uses this quotation in his *Commentary on Hippocrates's Epidemics VI*, 4, 11, 217.19-218.2 Wenkebach = XVIIIB.166.5-8 K.:

DB = V.6.8-9 K.), which also often features in Plutarch's moral works<sup>25</sup> – Galen's most probable source, given that the quotation does not appear in any other earlier or (near)-contemporary author<sup>26</sup> – Galen departs from his intellectual antecedents and embarks on a revisionary understanding of self-love, which is no longer negatively loaded (as being an obstacle to moral improvement), but rather signifies a genuine love of the self, a self-determined desire to really be *kalos kagathos* and not just appear to be (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 37.19-21 DB = V.56.16-57.1 K.).

The most remarkable technique that Galen employs, however, in his discussion of self-knowledge and self-love is the use of reference groups to create a sort of 'class fraction', directing the reader's behaviour. The starting point of this is found in Galen's reproachful statement that many people are reluctant to accept criticism from others, which leads him to explain why readers should act differently. 'Class fraction' is then employed on three more levels:

- a) In the distinction between immature youth and wise adulthood. This is demonstrated in Galen's personal confession that, when he was young, he would question the validity of the Pythian motto 'Know yourself', but later, as he reached a state of maturity, he eventually embraced it (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 5.1-3 DB = V.4.8-10 K.). Galen here puts on the cloak of a role-model by revisiting his earlier views on issues of morality, hence inviting his audience to have the same degree of acumen, acceptance and flexibility in their moral judgments.<sup>27</sup> As we will see later on in this Chapter, Galen is keen to advertise his moral character to quite some extent, as this was an essential attribute of philosophical authority in the Imperial period,

ἀλλ' ἔπει τυφλώττει τὸ φιλοῦν περὶ τὸ φιλούμενον, διὰ τοῦτο ἡ φιλαυτία πολλάκις ἐργάζεται τυφλοῦς ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τοῖς ἡμετέροις μόνοις, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἀλλότρια βλέπομεν ἀκριβέστατα.

<sup>25</sup> *On Friends and Flatterers* 48F; *On How to Benefit from your Enemies* 90A, 92F; *Platonic Questions* 1000A. Plutarch's passage in *De Adul. et Am.* 48F specifically has a similar focus on self-love as a source of self-deception: 'Plato says, my dear Antiochus Philopappus, that everyone grants forgiveness to the man who avows that he dearly loves himself, but he also says that along with many other faults which are engendered thereby the most serious is that which makes it impossible for such a man to be an honest and unbiased judge of himself (οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ κριτὴν δίκαιον οὐδ' ἀδέκαστον εἶναι). "For Love is blind as regards the beloved," unless one, through study, has acquired the habit of respecting and pursuing what is honourable rather than what is inbred and familiar' (transl. Babbitt). See also the preface to Plutarch's *On the Control of Anger* 452F-453A, stressing that others are more objective judges than oneself.

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g. Olivieri (1910: 99–109).

<sup>27</sup> Rosen (2009: 159–171) views this passage, alongside others from the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, as evidence of the influence of Socratism on Galen in this work in terms of structure and narrative form.

especially through the philosopher's anticipated role as pioneer and champion.<sup>28</sup>

- b) In the dichotomy between the wisest of men, who is the only one capable of knowing himself, and all the rest who are simply incompetent and unable to do so (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 5.3-5 DB = V.4.11-13 K.). Perhaps referring to the ideal of the Stoic sage, this dichotomy is not developed any further by Galen, because he does not as a rule offer models that are beyond the reach of most men.
- c) The divide between the common herd on the one hand and discerning or skilled men on the other, with the former making sense only of broad distinctions in life and art, whereas the latter grasp all the subtle differences therein (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 5.5-9 DB = V.4.13-17 K.).<sup>29</sup>

I am using the term 'class fraction' in relation to Galen's moralising argumentation based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'class fraction' or 'class distinction'. This theory holds that the way people present their social space determines their status in society and sets them apart from lower groups through clear-cut social separation. Bourdieu's theory rests predominantly on the aesthetic predilections that people (especially young ones) internalise to the point of making them deeply-rooted dispositions. However, his theory also covers other 'symbolic goods' that combine social, economic and cultural capital. As he posits, 'symbolic goods, especially those regarded as the attributes of excellence, constitute one of the key markers of "class" and also the ideal weapon in strategies of distinction . . .'.<sup>30</sup> Moral habitus, in the sense of developing and developed ethical patterns, may be seen as another such symbolic good in Galen, given that any moral tastes other than those embodied or proposed by him are presented as deviant and are thus likely to provoke rejection, and, as we will see, laughter, contempt or disgust.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, 'class fraction' in Galen does not only encourage the audience to espouse proper morals, but also establishes his role as an expert in the study

<sup>28</sup> Trapp (2017: esp. 33-35). Barton (1994: 139, 143-147) explores how the construction of Galen's *ethos* and his foregrounding of the self, help to cement his authority. Cf. von Staden (1997a) on the connection between morality and professional competence in Greek medicine.

<sup>29</sup> Class fraction as a discursive technique is also in evidence in Book 2 *On Errors*, where it is used to more scathing effect, involving donkeys: 'Sometimes, when stating some argument, I notice this, and ask them to repeat what has just been said; for it is apparent that – just like the ass with the lyre – they too have actually failed to follow what I have said altogether'. (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 44.1-3 DB = V.64.12-15 K.). Galen is fond of donkey imagery, which he often contrasts to human rationality, see e.g. *San. Tu.* 1.10, 25.2-5 Ko. = VI.52.7-10 K.

<sup>30</sup> Bourdieu (1984: 66). <sup>31</sup> Bourdieu (1984: 56).



of the soul. There is an arcane mention in the ensuing text of someone who is depicted as being able to distinguish between obvious passions (e.g. irascibility, promiscuity) and less obvious ones (moderate perturbation, slight overeating) and perceive their intensity depending on the way they are acted out. This man's discerning abilities are said to rely on a preliminary understanding of issues relating to the soul (προμελετήσαντι τὴν ψυχὴν) and an associated aptitude to deal with the rectification of passions (ἐξοδιάσαντί <τε> ἀπάντων παθῶν ἐπανορθώσεως) (*Aff. Pecc. Dig. 2, 5.9-16 DB = V.4.17-5.10 K.*). It is not unreasonable to see this as a veiled reference to Galen and his morally didactic role so far. This proposal is consistent with the way Galen goes on to advise specifically 'the person who wishes to be a decent human being' (ὁστις οὖν βούλεται καλὸς κάγαθὸς γενέσθαι, *Aff. Pecc. Dig. 2, 5.18 DB = V.5.10 K.*), with καλὸς κάγαθός being a metatextual label, constituting the cornerstone of moral essays both as a specified topic under investigation and a philosophical desideratum in social and political life in the ancient world. The suggestion also accords with Galen's subsequent admission that he has already discovered himself and his individual mistakes, having thus transcended the passions he lectures on for others. As we have seen in *Avoiding Distress* (Chapter 4), it is Galen's positive experience with tormenting passions that puts him in a position to guide others on similar issues through his works.

In fact, even though Galen emphasises the need for moral knowledge and the exercise of the intellect in the regulation of passions,<sup>32</sup> in what follows in this section he refrains for the present from giving a relevant account, because, as he explains, his book may at some point be transmitted to others and so he prefers to leave them 'first to be schooled in the discovery of the path to knowledge of their own errors' (ὅπως ἂν κάκεῖνοι γυμνασθῶσι πρότερον ὁδὸν εὐρεῖν τῆς γνώσεως τῶν ἰδίων ἀμαρτημάτων, *Aff. Pecc. Dig. 2, 5.21-23 DB = V.5.13-16 K.*). This has two implications: firstly, that the unnamed addressee indeed stands for a general readership, as previously argued; secondly, that Galen does not wish to provide processed material for immediate use, but rather to offer opportunities for moral gymnastics, as it were, pointing to the necessity for self-motivated ethical training. In addition, what is highlighted in the relationship between Galen and his audience is the discreet distance he chooses to

<sup>32</sup> The issue of how moral knowledge has a bearing on moral action and how mistaken beliefs about ethics lead to mistaken moral decisions is discussed in Book 2 *On Errors*, *Aff. Pecc. Dig. 1, 42.10-15 DB = V.60.6-12 K.* Elsewhere, Galen stresses that mistaken beliefs about the goal of life generate unhappiness (Book 2, *Affections and Errors of the Soul 3, 51.3-6 DB = V.74.8-11 K.*).

keep as an ethical mentor, in order to allow the active involvement of the moral agent:

So, just as I suggested that you tell me, and listened in silence while you declared what seems to you to be the case, I will now do the same, exhorting the reader of this piece of writing to reflect on it and enquire how one may gain the ability to recognise when one is oneself committing error.<sup>33</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 5.23-6.3 DB = V.5.16-6.3 K.

Moments of silence are always important for self-reflection in philosophical settings, especially in teacher-pupil dynamics.<sup>34</sup> Plutarch, for example, in his convivial dialogues argues that a lapse into silence can have two different responses in two different groups of attendees: idle and untalented participants (ἀργούς καὶ ἀφυσίς) feel relaxed and satisfied during a silent interval, whereas those who are ambitious and scholarly (τοῖς δὲ φιλοτίμοις καὶ φιλολόγοις) use it as an opportunity to make their own attempt to seek and track down the truth (ἀρχὴν ἐνδιδωσιν οἰκείαν καὶ τόλμαν ἐπὶ τὸ ζητεῖν καὶ ἀνιχνεύειν τὴν ἀλήθειαν) (*Quaest. Conv.* 694D). So, just as on a textual level, in the mode of a Socratic teacher, Galen propagates the idea of time for discreet self-contemplation, in the same way on a meta-level he allows time for an active, self-introspected reading of his piece.<sup>35</sup>

Later in the work Galen stresses how tricky internal investigation can really be and so he asserts that, if each individual finds some other way of identifying personal mistakes, he may add it to Galen's method and benefit from having two ways of salvation instead of one; otherwise, he can stick to Galen's suggested method until he finds a better one (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 6.16-24 DB = V.6.17-7.9 K.). It is clear that Galen's aim is to encourage self-alertness and independent scrutiny in the area of ethics, so as to foster the agent's energetic participation in his moral overhaul. Interestingly, when it comes to the area of the intellect, Galen significantly restricts the reader's exploratory possibilities: in Book 2 *On Errors*, which is much

<sup>33</sup> ὥσπερ <οὖν> καὶ σέ μοι λέγειν ἤξιῶσα καί, μέχρι τὸ σαυτῷ δοκοῦν ἀπεφῆνω, διεισιώπησα, καὶ νῦν οὕτω πράξω, παρακαλέσας τὸν ὀμιλοῦντα τῷδε τῷ γράμματι καταθέμενον αὐτὸ ζητήσαι, ὅπως ἂν τις ἑαυτὸν δύναίτο [τὸ] γνωρίζειν ἀμαρτάνοντα.

<sup>34</sup> The importance of silence and of the proper use of speech is a cardinal feature of Greek philosophical writings, e.g. Plato, *Phdr.* 272a, 275e; (ps-)Isocrates, *Ad Dem.* 41, *Bus.* 28; Philostratus, *VA* 1.15. On the didactic role of silence in Plutarch, see Xenophon (2016a: 64–65, 117, 191–193). Cf. Auberger (1993), Montiglio (2000: 9–45), van Nuffelen (2007).

<sup>35</sup> In Galen's *Affections and Errors of the Soul* silence also equips people with the tolerance they need to withstand moral criticism (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 9.20-10.14 DB = V.12.2-13.2 K.). Cf. Plutarch, *De Prof. in Virt.* 81F-82F, 84B-85E.

more self-assertive in tone than Book 1 on *Affections*, he proclaims that he has found just one way of investigating truth and that he is convinced that this is indeed the only way (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 45.20-23 DB = V.66.1-4 K.).

### The figure of the moral supervisor

In the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, Galen devotes a significant amount of space in the text to the figure of the moral supervisor, who is tasked with providing candid critique and exposing any moral frailties escaping the notice of those who commit them.<sup>36</sup> The personal advisor as psychagogue helps overcome any such barriers to a good life and is therefore a strategic instrument of moral improvement in Galen's text. Though treated by other thinkers as a general principle appreciated by philosophical learners in the Graeco-Roman world, Galen specifies some of this figure's defining features: he should be someone to whom the agents are emotionally indifferent (viz. someone who is neither hated nor loved by them) and should act mainly when self-love clouds self-knowledge, as seen in the [previous section](#).<sup>37</sup>

Before turning to the actual relationship between advisor and advisee, however, Galen inserts a short theoretical precis on passions, in order to show why it is important to free ourselves from them. Here he conceptualises passions as arising from non-rational impulses, but to some extent he also connects them to mistaken beliefs. This most likely points to a blending of the Platonic/Aristotelian stance on the dual constitution of the soul on the one hand, whereby the non-rational faculty unduly prevails

<sup>36</sup> On the figure of the moral critic/guide in Galen, see Singer (2013: 212), Lee (2014: 55-62), Schlange-Schönning (2015: 655-657), Gill (2010: 253), Lee (2020: 155-169). Harris (2001: 385-386) ponders the question of whether the moral critic was occupationally labelled (a physician, a philosopher or otherwise) and brings in textual evidence showing that elite Romans sometimes maintained household philosophers, who were responsible for their psychic health. See Hadot (1986) for an exploration of the spiritual guide in Graeco-Roman antiquity.

<sup>37</sup> In Clement of Alexandria's oration *Who Is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?* 41.1, a figure acting as a moral physician is described in terms similar to Galen's moral advisor: 'Hence it is necessary that you who are pompous and powerful and rich (τὸν σοβαρὸν καὶ δυνατὸν καὶ πλούσιον) should appoint for yourselves some man of God as a trainer and pilot (καθάπερ ἀλείπτῃν καὶ κυβερνήτην). Let it be one whom you respect, one whom you fear, one whom you condition yourself to heed when he is frank and severe in his speech, while at the same time tending to your cure (αἰδοῦ κἀν ἔνα, φοβοῦ κἀν ἕνα, μελέτησον ἀκούειν κἀν ἐνὸς παρρησιαζομένου καὶ στυφοντος ἄμα καὶ θεραπεύοντος).' Havrda (2011) has shown that Galen's logic has exercised an influence on Clement of Alexandria, which might strengthen the possibility of his having had an influence in the area of ethics too.

over the rational, giving rise to passions,<sup>38</sup> and the Stoic understanding of emotion theory, relying on monism, on the other, whereby the soul is entirely rational and passions are therefore seen as misguided judgments.<sup>39</sup> The Stoic influence is further attested in Galen's ensuing listing of passions, namely rage (θυμός), anger (ὀργή), fear (φόβος), distress (λύπη), envy (φθόνος) and vehement desire (ἐπιθυμία σφοδρά),<sup>40</sup> which is by no means far removed from the Stoic taxonomy of four cardinal passions: desire (ἐπιθυμία), fear (φόβος), delight (ἡδονή) and distress (λύπη).<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the language Galen attaches to freedom from emotions, especially the verb 'excise' (ἐκκόψειε, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 7.7 DB = V.8.1 K.), suggests Stoic eradication.<sup>42</sup> Yet it should be noted that the theoretical account is rounded off by Galen's critical modification that loving and hating too much can also be a form of affection, therefore arguing that Aristotelian moderation should also be taken into account as a principle in a regulated emotional life (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 6.25-7.6 DB = V.7.10-8.1 K.). This shows that, although the semantics of eradication is at play here, Galen, as we have noted in other Chapters, does not favour avoiding all kinds of affectivity, but only its more severe and destructive manifestations. In the case of anger, for example, in *Character Traits* Galen accepts a

<sup>38</sup> This Galenic approach is also dealt with in *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, Books 4–5, *Character Traits* and to some extent in *Avoiding Distress*.

<sup>39</sup> It is true that Galen does not explain how exactly moral passions interrelate with reason, nonetheless this is a notion he is keen to repeat elsewhere in ethical settings, e.g. in Book 2 *On Errors*, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 44.11-14 DB = V.63.10-14 K. Here he argues that moral passions such as self-love, self-regard, conceitedness and love of esteem give rise to intellectual errors regarding matters of good and bad in human life. It is important to note that when Galen refers to mental disturbances such as mania, melancholia or phrenitis affecting the brain, he is much more explicit that these passions relate to the rational faculty of the soul, e.g. *Loc. Aff.* 3.6 VIII.164.6-7 K.; cf. *Loc. Aff.* 3.5 VIII.159.7-160.7 K. On the idea that Galen does indeed mix Stoic-Epicurean and Platonic-Aristotelian moral standpoints, see Gill (2010: 251).

<sup>40</sup> See also Galen's similar list of passions in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 17.8-10 DB = V.24.4-7 K., from which envy has been dropped. Cf. the lists in *De Mor.* 26 Kr. (anger, desire, fear, love, pleasure, grief), *Hipp. Epid.* VI, 5, 6, 275.30-32 WP = XVIIIB.256.2-3 K. (anger, love of money, superstition, sexual desire), *MM* 13.5, X.841.8-11 K. (sudden and strong fears and extreme pleasures), *Ars Med.* 24, 351.3-5 Boudon-Millot = I.371.11-12 K. (anger, grief, joy, outburst, fear, envy); cf. Manuli (1988: 194).

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.110-111 (= *SVF* III.412): Τῶν δὲ παθῶν τὰ ἀνωτάτω, καθὰ φησιν Ἐκάτων ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ Περὶ παθῶν καὶ Ζήνων ἐν τῷ Περὶ παθῶν, εἶνα γένη τέτταρα, λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, ἡδονήν. Also in Anonymus Londiniensis 2.34-41 (5.34-41 Manetti): τῶν τε παθῶν τῶν περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν δύο ἐστὶν τὰ γενικώτατα κατὰ τοὺς ἀρχαίους· ἡδονὴ τε γὰρ καὶ δόξασις [...] κατὰ δὲ τοὺς Στωικούς τέσσαρα ἐστὶν τὰ γενικώτατα τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη· ἡδονὴ γὰρ καὶ ἐπιθυμία, φόβος τε καὶ λύπη. On Stoic emotions, see e.g. Nussbaum (2001), Brennan (2003), Tieleman (2003a: 114-122), Becker (2004).

<sup>42</sup> Harris (2001: 121). Other Stoic influences in the text are explored by Gill (2010: 253-255).

rationalised type of that passion, such as that performed in battle by a courageous agent (*De Mor.* 31–32 Kr.).<sup>43</sup>

In setting out, for the reader's convenience, a number of criteria for identifying the impartial advocate then, Galen differentiates the latter from the generic type of the flatterer, a repulsive stock character in moral writings. This is the starting point for a sustained argumentation, which makes the flatterer's way of life repellent to readers through 'class fraction'. In Galen's vivid description, the person who opts for money, power, esteem and reputation, conversing and dining on a regular basis with high-profile acquaintances in the city, will hardly be a lover of truth; he will be a dissimulating, self-interested liar. Conversely, the man who dismisses worldly needs and embraces a disciplined daily regime is more likely to speak the truth and be a genuine friend (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 7.11–8.1 DB = V.8.6–9.7 K.). It is not entirely clear whether Galen believes that a philosophically minded person should be unaffected by the concerns or aspirations of this world, but, as we will see below, he does seem inclined to suggest, as in his *Recognising the Best Physician* or *Prognosis*, that pre-philosophical engagements present numerous moral challenges.

More importantly, the description of the addressee's interaction with his moral director has something significant to say about the nature of Galen's ethics. It shows that it is very hands-on and deeply rooted within a broader social context, while problematising human behaviour on a macrocosmic level:

If you find that he [i.e. a potential moral advisor] is that kind of person [i.e. one who speaks the truth], take some opportunity to talk to him in private. Ask him to make evident to you directly which of the above-mentioned affections he sees in you, emphasising the gratitude you will feel towards him: he will be your saviour, even more so than the man who saves you when you have a bodily sickness. And if he promises that whenever he sees you in the grip of one of these affections he will make it evident to you, but after an interval of several days – days when he has spent time with you, of course – he has still said nothing, take him to task, and again ask him (even more persistently than before) to make known to you directly any act of yours which he observes to have been committed under the influence of affection. If he replies that his silence was due to his having observed no such action in you in the intervening period, do not readily believe him. Do not imagine that you have suddenly become free of error. There are two possible explanations. Either the friend that you have asked has been lazy in

<sup>43</sup> E.g. 'Whoever employs anger with thought displays steadiness, and whoever employs it without thought displays rashness', *De Mor.* 31 Kr. On anger in general, see Thumiger (2017: 345–352).

his attention to you, or his silence is due to shyness to criticise – or indeed reluctance to incur your hatred, because he realises that it is an almost universal human habit to hate those who speak the truth. Otherwise, the reason may be a reluctance to help you – or some other cause which I do not regard as praiseworthy. If you trust me, for the moment, when I say that it is impossible that you committed no error at all, you will subsequently praise me, when you see that all human beings commit countless errors every day, and act under the influence of countless affections, but are not themselves aware of it. So you should not imagine that you are anything other than human, either.<sup>44</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 8.1-21 DB = V.9.7-10.13 K.

Several aspects are worth commenting on here. First of all, Galen's sequence of tips on how the addressee should act under specific circumstances shows that the latter is not yet an independent personality, but rather needs systematic guidance on their way to moral growth. We see Galen offering him all the necessary advice in a step-by-step process. Secondly, the interaction with the advisor is not just meant to guide the addressee in this specific situation, but to enable him to get to grips with patterns of social conduct more generally. The passage quoted above represents part of a book on social manners. In particular, the advisor's posited a) indifference, b) reluctance to criticise or c) attract the other party's disapproval, or, even worse, d) potential resentment of a fellow-man's ethical progress, are all marked out as universal features of human conduct. Galen is in essence encouraging his audience to look out for the truth among any mendacities and sensitises them to the dissimulation and hypocrisy that can arise in the context of social etiquette. He warns them not to be deterred by the social conventions that hinder the revelation of truth; it is only when his audience is comfortable with exhibiting sincerity in social relations that they will be at ease with it on a personal level too.

<sup>44</sup> κὰν εὐρύης τοιοῦτον, ἰδίᾳ ποτὲ μόνῳ διαλέχθητι παρακάλεσας ὁ τι ἂν <ἐν> σοὶ βλέπῃ τῶν εἰρημένων παθῶν, εὐθέως δηλοῦν, ὡς χάριν ἔξοντι τούτου μεγίστην ἡγησομένῳ τε σωτήρα μᾶλλον ἢ εἰ νοσοῦντα τὸ σῶμα διέσωσε. κὰν ὑπόσχηται δηλώσει, ὅταν ἴδῃ τι τῶν εἰρημένων πάσχοντά σε, κάπειτα πλειόνων ἡμερῶν μεταξύ γιγνομένων μηδὲν εἶπη συνδιατρίβων δηλονότι, μέμψαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, αὐθὶς τε παρακάλεσον ἔτι λιπαρέστερον ἢ ὡς πρόσθεν, ὁ τι ἂν ὑπὸ σοῦ βλέπῃ κατὰ πάθος πραττόμενον, εὐθέως μηνύειν. ἐὰν δ' εἶπη σοι, διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἐωρακέναι περὶ σέ τοιοῦτον ἐν τῷ μεταξύ, διὰ τοῦτο μηδ' αὐτὸς εἰρηκέναι, μὴ πεισθῆς εὐθέως μηδ' οἰηθῆς ἀναμάρτητος ἐξαίφνης γεγονέναι, ἀλλὰ δυσὶν θάτερον, ἢ διὰ βραθυμίας οὐ προσεσηκέναι σοι τὸν παρακληθέντα φίλον ἢ ἐλέγχειν αἰδοῦμενον σιωπᾶν ἢ καὶ μισθηθῆναι μὴ βουλόμενον διὰ τὸ γινώσκειν ἅπασιν ὡς ἔπος εἶπεῖν ἀνθρώποις ἔθος εἶναι μισεῖν τοὺς τάληθῃ λέγοντας, ἢ εἰ μὴ διὰ ταῦτα, ἴσως <μὴ> βουλόμενον αὐτὸν ὠφελεῖν σε διὰ τοῦτο σιωπᾶν, ἢ καὶ <δὶ> ἄλλην τιὰ [ἴσως] αἰτίαν, ἣν οὐκ ἐπαινοῦμεν ἡμεῖς. ἀδύνατον γὰρ εἶναι τὸ μηδὲν ἡμαρτησθῆαι σοι, πιστεύσας ἐμοὶ τοῦτο νῦν ἐπαινέσεις <μ'> ὑστερον, θεώμενος ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν μυρία μὲν ἀμαρτάνοντας καὶ κατὰ πάθος πράττοντας, οὐ μὴν αὐτοῦς γε παρακολουθοῦντας. ὥστε μηδὲ σὺ νόμιζε σαυτὸν ἄλλο τι καὶ μὴ ἄνθρωπον εἶναι.

Consequently, the episode with the supervisor is not just a narrative of prescriptive moralism or a manual for a one-off incident. It is a moralising act of broader application with regard to how to regulate your behaviour in the quest for truth and virtue, what to expect from others while you do so, how to judge the quality of what they offer you and how to stick to your own moral priorities in what could prove tricky social relations. In that sense, Galen seems in tune with common standards in popular philosophical works of the later Roman period. For example, Seneca, in his *Letter* 94 'On the value of advice', explains that, since precepts are context-specific and appropriate to individual cases,<sup>45</sup> the aim of the philosophical area dealing with advice should rather be to equip a person with the necessary discernment to apply the rules appropriate to the situation at hand by himself. Put differently, the aim is to habituate oneself to the general tenor of life and a critical state of mind, and not just provide oneself with tailor-made instructions for certain occasions.<sup>46</sup>

A third point that is central to this same passage is that, with a view to pragmatic moralising, Galen shows compassion for the weaknesses of human nature and impresses the reader with a firm realisation that he should accept his wrongdoings, since he is neither perfect nor superhuman. Assuming that he was superhuman, would result in boastfulness and erroneous judgment. Indeed, a bit further down in the same context Galen reproves any tendency on the reader's part to assume that he is a perfect god, since he does not believe in any radical moral conversions, only in long-term practice (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 9.11-14 DB = V.11.8-12 K.).<sup>47</sup> This is in accordance with what has been suggested above, namely that Galen's point is not so much about finding the right advisor, but more about how to develop a proper mindset by which to conduct oneself in life.

### Politics and ethics: Free speech (*parrhēsia*) in context

Galen's emphasis on accepting moral criticism, as discussed above, moves onto a description of what seems to be a gloomy socio-political reality of his day. The author declares that both well-off men on the one hand and men of political standing on the other hand are in a disadvantageous ethical position compared with their fellow citizens, because any potential

<sup>45</sup> See also Seneca, *Letter* 71.1.

<sup>46</sup> See also Seneca, *Letter* 94.1-3 and Aristotle's similar emphasis on perceptivity in Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

<sup>47</sup> Also in *De Mor.* 28 Kr.: 'I think, [however], that someone who is, by nature, extremely cowardly and greedy will not, by means of education, become extremely brave and abstemious.'

critics will steer clear of revealing their passions, due to the hope of monetary gain (διὰ κέρδος) when it comes to well-off men, and due to fear (διὰ φόβον) when it comes to politicians (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 10.19-21 DB = V.13.6-10 K.). This observation leads Galen to go as far as to say that, if someone of great wealth desires to become a decent human being (γενέσθαι καλὸς καγαθός), he will have to put aside any worldly privileges, especially now that there is no Diogenes (of Sinope) with the courage to speak frankly to him (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 10.22-11.3 DB = V.13.11-15 K.). How to interpret this? Are we to take these utterances at face value, as if they are suggesting that state offices and riches preclude any chance of moral excellence? This is not very likely, given that just a few lines later in the text Galen's own father is presented as both politically active and virtuous. In the same vein, elsewhere Galen posits that statesmanship is in practice driven by love of humanity and justice (*De Mor.* 36 Kr., *De Mor.* 51 Kr.) and in another instance he tells a story that has his fellow citizens in Pergamum pushing a Platonist professor into politics on the grounds that he was 'just, indifferent to money, approachable and mild'.<sup>48</sup> Nor is abstention from politics what Galen is proposing here, since he considers participation in political affairs and showing concern for people (τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ προνοεῖν ἀνθρώπων) the responsibility of noble and good men (ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν σπουδῆς, *Ind.* 14, 82.16-18 PX). In this context, it would be more reasonable to argue that, on a first level, this statement is used to reassure Galen's addressee, who is not said to be politically or financially powerful,<sup>49</sup> that he has better

<sup>48</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 28.12-15 DB = V.41.13-17 K. Cf. the work *Theriac, To Piso* attributed to Galen, at 1.1-2, 2.1-8 Boudon-Millot = XIV.210.3-211.1 K., where people who combine the administration of public affairs with the study of ancient philosophy are admired by the contemporary pseudo-Galenic author.

<sup>49</sup> In a subsequent section of the text, we will see that Galen describes his addressee as having more money and property than himself, being one of the richest men among the 120,000 citizens of his hometown. Such internal inconsistencies should not be regarded as self-contradictory statements, but rather examples of nuanced retexturing according to the individual emphasis within different conceptual frameworks each time. In the earlier section of the essay in which wealth and power are described as morally pernicious (ch. 3), it is rhetorically meaningful to discourage his addressee from such engagements and set him apart from others who have yielded to such vices, as argued in the main text; whereas in the ensuing section treating insatiability (ch. 9) it makes more sense for Galen to cast the addressee as extremely wealthy, to make him fit the credentials of so many of Galen's upper-class readers, whom he warns against insatiability, as we will see. *Pace Singer* (2013: 218-219), who claims that there are two distinct individuals whom Galen addresses in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*. See also Gill (2019: 137), who situates the change of addressee just after the beginning of chapter 6. This is intriguing, because that is probably where the reworked section of the text was interpolated. Hence, it is not unlikely that, in inserting the revised section, Galen no longer remembered the credentials of his addressee in the earlier part very exactly, and so proceeded to tailor them according to the needs of his new exposition where they would make more



chances of moral success than other reference groups who are truly sunk in vice, devoid of any hope of salvation (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 11.4-7 DB = V.13.16-14.1 K.). On another level, the statement may also function as a warning that worldly engagements can have challenging moral consequences. This squares with the earlier delineation of the flatterers who associate themselves with rich people, politicians and monarchs, and all the dark realities involved in those cases. To Galen's mind, political life and wealth are potentially vicious moral climates, whereas philosophy is seen as a path towards introspection and an affect-moderated life. In another section of this Chapter, I will discuss how Galen, in a similar fashion, presents insatiability as the main cause of grief, thus once again arguing for a worldly explanation for destructive passions.

Galen's emphasis on frank criticism of error is also interesting, because it relates to its use as a professed psychagogic approach in ancient philosophy. We know, for example, that the Epicurean Philodemus (1st c. BC) produced a work entitled *On Frank Criticism* (*Περὶ παρρησίας, De Libertate Dicendi*) to explore the concept of openness as the cornerstone of moral reform.<sup>50</sup> Michel Foucault, in developing the modern concept of *parrhēsia* as a mode of discourse, relies heavily on the ancient Greek understanding of the term, which meets certain prerequisites, all of which feature in Galen's own account of *parrhēsia*:

[T]he *parrhēsiastēs* is someone who takes a risk . . . When, for example, you see a friend doing something wrong and you risk incurring his anger by telling him he is wrong, you are acting as a *parrhēsiastēs*. In such a case, you do not risk your life, but you may hurt him by your remarks, and your friendship may consequently suffer for it. If, in a political debate, an orator risks losing his popularity because his opinions are contrary to the majority's

sense. For similar reconfigurings as clever argumentative strategies in Plutarch, see Xenophontos (2016a). In any case, if Galen really wanted to introduce another addressee into the work (not a very common thing to do in similar texts by other authors), he could have found a way to mark the change of addressee more explicitly and avoid appearing self-contradictory. See, e.g. Curtis's pertinent remarks (2014: 57) on Galen's use of the 'interlocutory-you', which 'is never specifically identified': 'The "you" here is not an actual addressee but a convention of logical discourse'. Cf. Tieleman (2015: 170), who coins the term 'prevailing coherence' in Galen to account for inconsistencies across a corpus produced over a timespan of fifty years. See also van der Eijk (1997b: 85-86), who appositely discusses a number of communicative parameters such as authorial intention, targeted audience and the occasion that gives rise to a work, which help us explain textual 'inconsistencies' in the context of ancient scientific and philosophical literature.

<sup>50</sup> On which see Tsouna (2009: 252-254). Besides being a 'mode of ethical self-definition' (Fields 2020: 168), free speech was also a central Greek ideal in political and social settings in the Imperial period; see e.g. Fields's chapter on authorising frankness in Lucian (2020: 162-190) or Peterson (2019: 82-116), who discusses the hero of Lucian's *Fisherman Parrhesiades* ('Frankness') in the context of satiric and comic *parrhēsia*.

opinion, or his opinions may usher in a political scandal, he uses *parrhēsia*. *Parrhēsia*, then, is linked to courage in the face of danger . . . And in its extreme form, telling the truth takes place in the ‘game’ of life or death.<sup>51</sup>

As per Foucault’s description, the moral advisor in Galen is a *parrhēsiastēs*, who has an unnegotiable commitment to truth and opts for sincerity rather than falsehood, flattery or self-interest. He is also a person ‘who has the moral qualities which are required, first, to know the truth, and secondly, to convey such truth to others’.<sup>52</sup> This puts him in a position of risk, either with regard to his own social growth or his relationship with the recipient of his criticism. Still the moral advisor/*parrhēsiastēs* does not succumb to social pressure or fear, but prefers to remain faithful to truth, which he considers his moral duty, as a means of helping improve other people. Key examples mentioned by Foucault are Plato’s exchange with Dionysius of Syracuse, as described in Plutarch’s *Life of Dion*, or Socrates’s didactic role in the Platonic dialogues more generally,<sup>53</sup> although *parrhēsia* becomes part and parcel of the self-presentation of later moral philosophers, such as Seneca and Epictetus. Moreover, in line with Foucault’s understanding of the parrhesiastic enterprise, Galen’s own use of *parrhēsia* also points to a ‘speech or verbal activity’ ‘linked to a certain social situation’,<sup>54</sup> and, especially in Galen’s philosophical programme, it is associated with ‘the care of the self’ and ‘the education of the soul’.<sup>55</sup>

The Foucauldian characteristics of the *parrhēsiastēs* also align with Galen’s description of his fellow student Teuthras, an example *par excellence* of a frank person, who in *Bloodletting, Against the Erasistrateans at Rome* becomes Galen’s guide in his encounter with a group of senior Erasistratean physicians. In this episode, Galen refers to Teuthras as exceedingly frank in his ways (ἦν δὲ πάνυ τὸν τρόπον ἐλεύθερος) and reveals the hallmarks of his activity: he addresses problematics with riveting honesty, urges reconsideration, affords ample evidence of phenomena not yet perceived by people in a disadvantageous position and resorts to bodily language to signify his contempt for those hiding the truth (*Ven. Sect. Er. Rom.* 1, 29.6–31.3 Kotrc = XI.193.6–195.3 K.). It is in the same light that we should imagine the activity of the moral advisor in *Affections and Errors*

<sup>51</sup> Foucault (1985: 4) (available at <https://foucault.info/parrhesia/>, last accessed 3 February 2020).

<sup>52</sup> Foucault (1985: 3). Likewise, in *Semen* Galen asserts that being aware of a problem and deliberately saying nothing (σιωπᾶν ἐκόντας) is not an act associated with good men (οὐκ ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔργον ἐστὶ), while to think that it is not even worth looking into the problem is a sign of dull-witted men (νοθρῶν τὴν διάνοιαν ἀνθρώπων), *Sem.* 2.1, 152.24–16 De Lacy = IV.602.6–9 K.

<sup>53</sup> Foucault (1985: 4 and 8, 35–42 respectively). <sup>54</sup> Foucault (1985: 2–3).

<sup>55</sup> Foucault (1985: 8).

of the Soul, who is mentioned in the text as an exponent of openness mostly on a theoretical level, with his actual duties remaining unspecified.

Galen's delineation of the moral advisor may be further illuminated by comparing it with Plutarch's *On Friends and Flatterers*. This work presents key affinities with Galen's *Affections and Errors of the Soul* in the way the advisor is seen as a true friend, although this connection is never explicitly made in Galen, because his advisor, unlike Plutarch's friend, was not supposed to be acquainted with the recipient of his moral advice.<sup>56</sup> The concept of *parrhēsia* is pre-eminent in Plutarch's essay,<sup>57</sup> sometimes in its deceptive version, which the flatterer adopts to mislead the agent (*De Adul. et Amic.* 51B-C; *De Adul. et Amic.* 59B-60C), and at other times in its sincere variety, the one used by the true friend. The latter is often combined with reprehension and stinging words, which render it therapeutic (θεραπευτική παρρησία, *De Adul. et Amic.* 73A-E); it also shows genuine care for one's fellow man (κηδεμονική, *De Adul. et Amic.* 55B-C) and should thus be mixed with seriousness and candour (σπουδῆν ἐχέτω καὶ ἦθος, *De Adul. et Amic.* 68C).<sup>58</sup> We see, therefore, that Galen's basic distinctions in his account of *parrhēsia* conform to Plutarch's own, although it is also remarkable that whereas Plutarch's text is full of metaphors and analogies from medicine that illustrate the therapeutic action of openness (e.g. *De Adul. et Amic.* 55A-B, 63C-D),<sup>59</sup> there is almost nothing of this sort in Galen.<sup>60</sup> True, we do get some terminology

<sup>56</sup> In Seneca, as in Plutarch, someone who passes judgment and speaks openly is a friend rather than someone unknown to the moral agent (*Letter* 3, 'On True and False Friendship'). Overall, Seneca's moral advisor is more of a guardian offering admonitions to help the person rectify mistaken opinions and beliefs, *Letter* 94.55, 94.59-74. The advisor's role is based on strong philosophical foundations that teach that advice clarifies right conduct, thus ensuring probity. See, e.g. *Letter* 94.45-46.

<sup>57</sup> O'Neil (1997) discusses Plutarch's notion of friendship that considered frankness the most important defining characteristic of a true friend, along with the other criteria of true friendship.

<sup>58</sup> Clement of Alexandria had developed a wide spectrum of forms of rebuke in his *Paedagogus* 1.9 (76.1-81.3).

<sup>59</sup> The same applies to Seneca's *Letters*, e.g. *Letter* 75 'On the Diseases of the Soul', which includes references to the physician called upon to attend the sick, and to medicine more broadly (75.6-14). These are used as metaphors for or parallels to the workings and treatment of the soul. See also, *Letter* 94.17-20.

<sup>60</sup> The *topos* juxtaposing flattery and straight talking was key to the encomiastic genre in the Second Sophistic, in which the metaphor of the frank philosopher as an efficient doctor of the soul played an integral part, e.g. Seneca, *Letter* 75.5-7: 'Our words should aim not to please, but to help . . . A sick man does not call in a physician who is eloquent . . . [instead the patient should say to the eloquent doctor:] Why do you tickle my ears? Why do you entertain me? There is other business at hand; I am to be cauterized, operated upon, or put on a diet. That is why you were summoned to treat me!'. Cf. Dio of Prusa, *Oration* 33.2-8, where again the doctor should not declaim eloquently but take drastic measures to eliminate sickness, just as the philosopher should rebuke to remedy

that might have medical connotations (e.g. the excision of moral passions mentioned above), or very brief references to analogies from medicine (e.g. the ethical monitor is seen as a more important ‘saviour’ than the one who saves someone from bodily sickness, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 8.3-4 DB = V.9.9-11 K.), yet we hardly find anything more extensive or specific to the medical art, as in other moralists.<sup>61</sup> This aligns with Galen’s general practice of concealing his medical identity in the ethical contexts, most likely as a way of making his contribution to this quite different area of intellectual activity more visible and robust.<sup>62</sup> This is not to say, however, that there is nothing pertaining to the body, because Galen exploits the medically-inspired trope of the body as an analogy for the soul, as we will now see.

### Body and soul: Moral aesthetics and the therapy of anger

In underscoring the importance of life-long training (*askēsis*) as a prerequisite for moral progress, Galen contends that the care of the soul, irrespective of its condition, should never be neglected, just as the body is never abandoned when in a bad state. The author’s implication is that both soul and body are essential to our preservation as human beings, which leads him to advise that we should not allow our soul to become ‘utterly disgusting’ (πάναισχρον), comparing it to Thersites’s body (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 11.15-25 DB = V.14.11-15.7 K.). The reference to Thersites here is quite effective, since he is the typical case of physical ugliness in Homer (αἴσχιστος, *Iliad* 2.216-19). Interestingly, in the Iliadic intertext Thersites comes off as ‘most hateful’ (ἔχθιστος, *Iliad* 2.220) not so much

moral infelicities (quote from 33.6-7): ‘Well then, the sort of recitation of which I speak, being a kind of spectacle or parade, has some resemblance to the exhibitions of the so-called physicians, who seat themselves conspicuously before us and give a detailed account of the union of joints, the combination and juxtaposition of bones, and other topics of that sort, such as pores and respirations and excretions. And the crowd is all agape with admiration and more enchanted than a swarm of children. But the genuine physician is not like that, nor does he discourse in that fashion for the benefit of those who actually need medical attention – of course not – but instead he prescribes what should be done, and if a man wants to eat or drink, he stops him, or he takes his scalpel and lances some abscess of the body. Just as, therefore, if the sick were to assemble and then proceed to serenade the physician and call for a drinking-bout, the outcome would not meet their expectation, nay, they might well be annoyed at their reception, such it seems to me, is the situation of the masses when they gather before a man like me and bid him make a speech, obviously never having sampled the words of truth and consequently expecting to hear something sweet and pleasant.’

<sup>61</sup> The only exception that validates the general rule is *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 31.1-12 DB = V.45.8-46.5 K., where Galen refers to the theory of digestion to explain what kind of passion insatiability is. Despite the technical background of the description, the ethical associations of this section are exceedingly important for Galen’s moral discourse in this context, as will be shown later on in this Chapter.

<sup>62</sup> And not to avoid trivialising the science in which he is an expert, i.e. medicine, as has been suggested by Singer (2013: 215–216).

for his abhorrent appearance as for his objectionable moral qualities: his immoderate speech, disorderly words, utter reviling of the kings and his overall abusive behaviour (*Iliad*, 2.212-216, 2.220-223, 2.274-277), which eventually excited the Greeks' indignation, leading Odysseus to strike him (*Iliad*, 2.265-271). This Homeric episode which underlies Galen's account is far from frivolous, given that Thersites's free speech is not based on healthy criticism but on ill-favoured obscenity, and is therefore not a proper manifestation of *parrhēsia* as advocated by Galen. The social response to Thersites's sordid behaviour is also important, since he is bitten, mocked and humiliated in front of others, thus ushering in the social evaluation of moral ugliness, which strategically discourages Galen's audience from disregarding their own psychic condition. According to this view, Thersites's vulgarity, unlike the *parrhēsia* Galen espouses, could be linked to the modern notion of 'Thersitism', initially coined by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and then taken up by Friedrich Nietzsche and above all the American literary theorist Kenneth Burke, among others. This is a literary device according to which the author of a work generates objection, contradiction or protest in his work but does so not in any explicit fashion, but through subsidiary characters who could be easily dismissed by the majority of readers.<sup>63</sup> In Galen's case, his moralising narrative up to this point would have easily persuaded his readership neither to identify with the morally abominable Thersites nor adopt any of his social attitudes. This is what we have seen happening in *Against Julian*, where Galen also employs the antitype of Thersites for his general promotion of moral edification (Chapter 3).

The connection between body and soul takes on a more sophisticated form through the explicit association between bodily and psychic excellence:

For it is desirable, if one cannot have the body of Hercules, to have that of Achilles; or, failing that, the body of Ajax, Diomedes, or Agamemnon or Patroclus; or, failing those, the body of some other admirable heroes. So too with the soul: someone who is unable to have the perfect sort of good condition would, I believe, settle for being second, third or fourth from top. And this is not impossible for one who has decided to exert himself for a long period in a process of constant training.<sup>64</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 12.3-10 DB = V.15.11-16.3 K.

<sup>63</sup> Burke (1966: 110-111). See also, Furedi (2013: 16-30), Ch. 1 on 'Thersites and the personification of anti-authority'.

<sup>64</sup> ἀγαπητόν γάρ εἰ καὶ μὴ τὸ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους, ἀλλὰ τὸ γε τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως σχεῖν, ἢ εἰ μὴδὲ τούτου, τὸ γε τοῦ Αἴαντος ἢ Διομήδους ἢ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἢ Πατρόκλου, εἰ δὲ μὴ τούτων, ἄλλων γέ τινων ἀγαστών ἡρώων. οὕτως οὖν, εἰ καὶ μὴ τὴν τελείαν εὐεξίαν τις οἶός τ' ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἔχειν, δέξαιτ' ἂν οἶμαι δεῦτερος ἢ τρίτος ἢ τέταρτος γενέσθαι μετὰ τὸν ἄκρον. οὐκ ἀδύνατον δὲ τοῦτο τῷ βουλευθέντι κατεργάσασθαι χρόνῳ πλείονι συνεχῶς τῆς ἀσκήσεως γενομένης.

What the passage cited above conjures up is a feeling of assessment, competition and social classification, which develops into the aesthetic assessment of emotions. Specifically, Galen recalls a series of incidents he has experienced personally, all of which negotiate the pathology of anger, i.e. its causes and effects, as well as its ‘staging’, (i.e. how the passion is rhetorically shaped and performed),<sup>65</sup> using them as literary techniques to warn readers against falling victim to such damaging psychological conditions.

The first episode adumbrates how a person rushing to open a door did not succeed in the task, and so, in the grip of extreme anger, he began ‘biting the key (δάκνοντα τὴν κλεῖν), kicking the door (λακτίζοντα τὴν θύραν), cursing the gods (λοιδορούμενον τοῖς θεοῖς), rolling his eyes wildly as madmen do (ἡγριωμένον τε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὥσπερ οἱ μαινόμενοι), and all but frothing at the mouth like a boar (καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν αὐτὸν ἀφρὸν ὡς οἱ κάπροι προϊέμενον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος)’ (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 12.11–15 DB = V.16.3–9 K.).<sup>66</sup> The link Galen makes between behavioural ferocity and impropriety, on the one hand, and elements of mental disturbance<sup>67</sup> together with bodily disfigurement on the other, underpins and helps to justify his evaluative response to the spectacle: ‘I hated this rage so much that I would never be seen thus disfigured by it’ (ἐμίσησα τὸν θυμὸν οὕτως, ὥστε μηκέτ’ ὀφθῆναι δι’ αὐτὸν ἀσχημονοῦντά με, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 12.11–15 DB = V.16.3–9 K.). An extreme emotion (hatred) arises from the observation of another (truly revolutive) extreme emotion (anger); while the language of behaving in an unseemly fashion and disgracing oneself, represented by the participle ἀσχημονοῦντα, flags up the social perception of anger in terms of its aesthetic evaluation, as with the Thersites example above. The interrelation between moral and aesthetic ugliness was pervasive in ancient moral works, as noted (Chapter 2),<sup>68</sup> but in Galen’s text this is taken further in the author’s direct prescription to readers that the ugly displays of this passion should be restrained by all possible means and concealed from public view (ἀλλ’ ἐν σαυτῷ κατέχειν τε καὶ κρύπτειν τὴν ὀργὴν . . . κατασχεῖν δὲ τὸ τοῦ πάθους ἀσχημον δύναται, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 12.19–21 DB = V.16.13–16 K.).

<sup>65</sup> In using the term ‘staging’, I am following Zurcher’s study on the staging of the emotions, which stipulates that ‘dramaturgically considered, emotion, or more accurately the performance of emotion, is enacted by the individual in terms of his or her understanding of appropriate emotional behaviors in a particular situation’; see Zurcher (1982: 2).

<sup>66</sup> Rabbow (1914: 97–100) pins down some of the traditional elements in Galen’s presentation of passions, especially borrowings from Plato, Chrysippus, Seneca and Plutarch.

<sup>67</sup> Devinant (2018: 204).<sup>68</sup> See also Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* 1127b9–13.

William Harris sees this episode as mere fiction, citing striking parallels from Chrysippus and Philodemus (*SVF* III.478; cf. Philodemus, *On Anger* fragm. 8 Indelli) to substantiate his claim that biting the key when the door fails to open is pretty much a trope with an instructive aim.<sup>69</sup> To endorse Harris's view that the episode could be constructive, one could also add that the 'rolling eyes' Galen assigns to the enraged man fits the symptomatology of the raging patient and also the examination of a patient's eyes as a diagnostic tool for the presence of severe rage.<sup>70</sup> In Galen's case, the 'staged' display of this passion, as argued in this Chapter, augments the image's impact on the audience and therefore renders the mastery of the passion even more pressing, in the mode of an 'aversion therapy'.<sup>71</sup> Spectacularised fiction is put at the service of moral didacticism.

To return to the Galenic episode, direct counselling is superseded by four further types of moralising discourse:

- a) influencing the reader by means of personal example, and more specifically through a brief story about how, as a boy, Galen was trained by his father not to strike any household servants, thus stressing how early discipline can produce proper habits for adult life (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 13.1-4 DB = V.17.3-6 K.).
- b) Embedded within the above narrative is the exemplum of Galen's father as a moral monitor for other people, whom he reprimanded for having bitten their servants when in a state of uncontrollable anger (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 13.4-8 DB = V.17.6-12 K.).
- c) An anecdote involving the emperor Hadrian stages his irascibility, which led to the physical maltreatment of an enslaved person, causing him to lose an eye (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 13.12-18 DB = V.17.16-18.4 K.).<sup>72</sup> This anecdote is attached to an episode

<sup>69</sup> Harris (2001: 12-13).

<sup>70</sup> 'That which arises from rage, too, occurs with vehemence, and should not be otherwise impossible for an intelligent person to spot, if he observes the eyes and the whole face too' (καὶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἡ ἀπὸ τοῦ θυμοῦ μετὰ σφοδρότητος γίνεται, καὶ οὐδ' ἂν ἄλλως λάθοι τὸν γὰρ συνετόν εἰς τε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ τὸ σὺμπαν πρόσωπον ἀποβλέποντα), *Praes. Puls.* 1.1, IX.214.16-215.1 K. See also Thumiger (2017: 79-97), who suggests that the eyes are 'the organ or locus where the mental state is displayed and even takes place, and which can be adequately interpreted as embodied mental experience' (p. 86).

<sup>71</sup> Alexander (2008: 176) defines 'aversion therapy' 'as a way of displaying the full awfulness of uncontrolled passion and the depths to which sufferers will sink under its sway'.

<sup>72</sup> For several interpretations of this anecdote, see Schlange-Schöningh (2015: 657-658) and especially his own view that this anecdote betokens Galen's opposition to Hadrian's monarchic rule: 'Denn man sollte auch berücksichtigen, dass Hadrian in Galens Heimatstadt Pergamon als νέος Ἀσκληπιός verehrt worden ist, und der damit verbundene Anspruch auf göttliche Ehren wird

involving one of Galen's friends from Crete who was also irascible, thus suggesting that anger is a universal trait of human behaviour, irrespective of ethnic identity and socio-political standing.

- d) This incident with Galen's friend from Gortyn in Crete is framed as an ethical case history.<sup>73</sup> The protagonist is a patient with a moral affection, in this case excessive anger, and a close acquaintance of Galen. The narrative is initially focused on an overall description of the patient's ethical condition: despite being straightforward, admirable, friendly, kind and liberal, he was also exceedingly hot-tempered so that he often inflicted corporal punishment on his servants. After that, the aetiology of the passion is described, illustrated by a trip this friend made outside Rome with Galen when, in the grip of extreme rage, he brutally attacked his two servants using a knife.<sup>74</sup> The realisation of what he has done led him to repent and ask Galen to flog him as punishment for his 'accursed rage', as he called it. Galen responds to his friend's remorse with amused contempt (he laughs in disapproval) in emulation of Socratic jesting (παιδιά)<sup>75</sup> and accordingly invites his audience to distance themselves from a similar display of this emotion.<sup>76</sup>

mit der von Galen erzählten Anekdote zurückgewiesen. Ein Kaiser, der sich von seinem Zorn dazu verleiten lässt, einen seiner Sklaven auf nicht wieder gut zu machende Weise zu verletzen, ist in seinem Machtmissbrauch das krasse Gegenteil eines fürsorglichen, Asklepios-ähnlichen Herrschers.' Although this specific anecdote is not found in any other surviving source, Hadrian's tendency to lose his temper is extensively dealt with in hagiography, and more specifically in the narration of the martyrdom of St Sophia and her three daughters, Love, Faith and Hope, 7.7-10, 7.36-38, 10.32-34, 13.1-2; ed. Halkin. Hadrian's wrath in this context reflects the hagiological convention which often presents the Roman torturers of Christian martyrs as uncontrollably angry, as opposed to the calm and almost passionless martyrs. Cf. Birley (1997: 167 with n. 13 on p. 337).

<sup>73</sup> García Ballester (1988: 143-144) referred to this story as a 'clinical history' of anger, though he did not explore it at any length. In her Appendix B of Galenic case histories, Mattern (2008a: 174-175; Case nos. 17-23) lists this story together with other incidents of heightened anger and/or grief, but does not differentiate them in any particular sense from the purely medical case histories.

<sup>74</sup> This is another instance which could have allowed Galen to give medical details on the description of the wound or his contribution to treating it. There is nothing of the sort, however, which suggests that Galen distinguishes medicine from moral philosophy, being conscious that he is writing in the context of a separate discipline and genre.

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. *UP* 1.9, 18.7-17 Helmreich = III.25.4-13 K., where we find Galen's interpretation of Socrates's role: 'Of course it is characteristic of the Socratic muse constantly to mingle grave and gay' (αὐτῆ γὰρ ἡ Σωκράτους μούσα, μίγνυειν αἰεὶ τὴν σπουδῆν ἐν μέρει παιδιᾶς).

<sup>76</sup> Both Stoics and Epicureans refer frequently to the ludicrous and grotesque effects of unchecked passions, as Hankinson (1993: 200) argues. However, as I note in this study, in Galen laughter is a strong response to cognitive or moral incompetency; e.g. in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 45.3-7 DB = V.64.15-65.3 K., less educated people are being laughed at (καταγελάωμενοι) by literate ones. Cf. Harris's perfunctory interpretation (2001: 333): 'Galen kept laughing (an odd-seeming reaction, explicable by the absolute unimaginability of a [*sic*] applying a whip to one's friend), and gave him a good talking-to.'



The objectification of the Cretan friend in the narrative therefore may be seen as:

‘a kind of moral voyeurism in which only the “I” and the “you” of the discourse have real choices; the many other characters introduced as examples of the passions simply provide a kind of ethical peep show, eternally cranking through their despicable – or pitiable – behavior patterns at the behest of the philosopher and his pupil’.<sup>77</sup>

After the patient’s description of emotional symptoms comes Galen’s therapeutic enterprise. This encompasses a lengthy discussion between Galen and the patient, clarifying to the latter how the thymoeidic (spirited) part of the soul is schooled not through flogging, but through the power of reason (*logos*), involving verbal communication (in the form of Socratic dialectics) to remedy someone’s behaviour and establish well-founded, long-term moral habits (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 13.19–15.5 DB = V.18.4–20.9 K.). This is also known as the ‘therapy of the word’.<sup>78</sup> It should be noted that Galen’s actual therapeutic lesson is never amplified in the text, only implied, and that the only thing that matters for the purposes of the narrative is to stress the positive outcome of Galen’s therapy.

Indeed, this moral clinical encounter is rounded off with a dedicated section on prognosticating how the moral affection improved in the space of a year, with Galen extrapolating the prognostic time-plan of moral progress and attaching it to the addressee of the essay this time, so as to inform him what kind of progress he could expect to have in years to come (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 4, 15.6–15 DB = V.20.9–21.5 K.). This and the other case histories that I describe as ethical share the majority of the formal and structural criteria of Galen’s medical case histories as analysed by Susan Mattern, which are: a) the three-stage medical process of diagnosis, cure, prognosis and the corresponding three-stage narrative process of background (a patient’s history before Galen’s intervention), crisis (encounter with Galen) and resolution (recovery); b) the demarcation of medical time; c) the use of a recollected narrative form in the aorist tense and indicative voice; d) their identification as stories that derive from Galen’s experience

<sup>77</sup> Alexander (2008: 180).

<sup>78</sup> E.g. Singer (2018: 394–395), García Ballester (1988: 144–145). More generally, see recently, Thumiger (2019), whose definition of the term rightly extends to include not just ‘forms of talking and communication’ but also ‘occupational aspects, travels and activities; distractions of the mind – emotional, artistic, intellectual, interpersonal diversions; and in general, any remedy acting within the personal and private sphere . . .’ (at p. 742). On the therapy of the word in classical antiquity, see Laín Entralgo (1970). Verbal interaction with the patient was also suggested by doctors such as Celsus and Caelius Aurelianus. See Gill (1985: 318–319).

and which he himself acknowledges as distinct units of discourse; e) their use not just to substantiate a medical point but also to transmit medical knowledge through examples (παράδειγματα), while f) simultaneously promoting the author and establishing his relationship with his audience.<sup>79</sup> These affinities show that, in producing his own version of a widely-used and adaptable form of moral preaching and specifically employing ethically troubling cases or stories, what I have called ethical case-histories, Galen is inspired by his medical knowledge and experience of clinical encounters with patients (see also [Chapter 4](#)).

Despite the low social status of household slaves in classical antiquity (e.g. Plato in the *Laws*, Book 6, 777e-778a, favours punishing them when they err, while Aristotle in *Politics* 1253b.32 regards a slave as merely a live article of property), in the post-Hellenistic ethical-philosophical legacy, the relation between master and servant became a *Leitmotif* when proposing the control of anger. Epictetus, for example, in discussing the treatment of slaves, asserts that masters could stop themselves exploding with rage when slaves were disobedient or mistaken, by bearing in mind the natural brotherhood that connects the master and the slave (*Discourses* 1.13). Seneca proceeded along similar lines in his *On the Control of Anger* (e.g. 1.15, 2.25, 3.12; cf. *Letter* 47 ‘On master and slave’), while comparable moral attitudes are espoused by Plutarch in his own *On the Control of Anger*.<sup>80</sup> Strikingly enough, this Plutarchan text shows important thematic resemblances with Galen’s mini script on the pathology of anger cited above: a) specifically the proem to Plutarch’s text presents the dialogue between two close friends, Sulla and Fundanus, who have been reunited in Rome for five months now, after Sulla’s annual absence from the city. This daily association, which is also important in Galen’s rapport with his Cretan friend, makes Sulla realise the moral progress Fundanus has made in controlling his anger. b) The text suggests that this was made possible by the use of therapeutic words – what Galen calls ‘the power of *logos*’ in his own text – and the fact that Fundanus’s thymoeidic part has been willingly subjected to the power of reason (*De Coh. Ira* 453B-F). c) Plutarch, like Galen, also emphasises the display of this emotion (*De Coh. Ira* 455B), the social reaction to it, which generates laughter, hatred and scorn in spectators (*De Coh. Ira* 455E), the observation of the passion in other people who suffer from it, especially their facial and bodily deformity, as a way of distancing oneself from it (*De Coh. Ira* 455E-456E, *De Coh. Ira* 458D), and its aesthetic assessment (*De Coh. Ira* 456C-D). d) More importantly,

<sup>79</sup> Mattern (2008a: 41–46, 65–66).

<sup>80</sup> Trapp (2007: 208–210).

the Plutarchan intertext also includes an extensive account of the arousal of anger particularly in interactions with slaves (*De Coh. Ira* 459C–460C; cf. *De Coh. Ira* 460F–462B). The above evidence makes it probable that Galen positioned himself, alongside other luminaries, in a long-standing tradition of practical ethics that offered practical tips for the regulation of anger.<sup>81</sup>

Although ancient moralists as a rule acknowledged that anger was an affection of the soul, Plutarch and Seneca put significant emphasis on its display as mental illness and described its physicality as madness, highlighting its medical associations, especially its aetiology and mostly its physiological symptoms. Seneca *On the Control of Anger* 1.1 is informative:

Some of the wisest of men have in consequence of this called anger a short madness: for it is equally devoid of self-control, regardless of decorum, forgetful of kinship, obstinately engrossed in whatever it begins to do, deaf to reason and advice, excited by trifling causes, awkward at perceiving what is true and just, and very like a falling rock which breaks itself to pieces upon the very thing which it crushes. That you may know that they whom anger possesses are not sane, look at their appearance; for as there are distinct symptoms which mark madmen, such as a bold and menacing air, a gloomy brow, a stern face, a hurried walk, restless hands, changed colour, quick and strongly-drawn breathing, so too the signs of angry men are the same: their eyes blaze and sparkle, their whole face is a deep red with the blood which boils up from the bottom of their heart, their lips quiver, their teeth are set, their hair bristles and stands on end, their breath is laboured and hissing, their joints crack as they twist them about, they groan, bellow, and burst into scarcely intelligible talk, they often clap their hands together and stamp on the ground with their feet, and their whole body is highly-strung and plays those tricks which mark a distraught mind, so as to furnish an ugly and shocking picture of self-perversion and excitement.

This is the kind of (quasi-)scientific material one would expect to find in Galen, yet it is simply never there, at least not in any refined or detailed exposition.<sup>82</sup> What Galen does instead is to add classical commonplaces from popular philosophy relating to anger, while minimising any medically-oriented associations or connotations that explain the passion. For example, he employs the philosophical motif according to which one should postpone punishment of servants while one is still angry (*Aff. Pecc.*

<sup>81</sup> A useful overview of anger and its role in the relationship between slave-owners and slaves may be found in Harris (2001: 317–336).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Plutarch's *De Coh. Ira* 455E–F.

*Dig. 5*, 15.21-16.4 DB = V.21.12-22.3 K.) – familiar from other moralists,<sup>83</sup> and then he inserts a passing reference to the way he theorises anger as a kind of mental disturbance (μανία and its cognates are used four times) with its accompanying outward expressions (kicking, biting, tearing of clothes, *Aff. Pecc. Dig. 5*, 16.5-15 DB = V.22.4-18 K.). The closest Galen gets to a more scientific understanding of the affection is through his reference to it as a ‘boiling’ of the thymoeidic component of the soul (*Aff. Pecc. Dig. 5*, 16.4 DB = V.22.4 K.). We know that anger as the boiling of the blood in the heart has a strong scientific grounding in more technical Galenic works,<sup>84</sup> yet in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* Galen does not give any further details on any of these physical correlates of affections of the soul. He remains sharply focused on philosophical themes that would have been pretty much conventional in the genre of the therapy of emotions. Galen persists in not sacrificing his claims to being taken seriously in the area of ethics. His ethical works will not be judged by medics anyway, so he sees no point in saturating them with medical terminology. To that end, he also broaches the theme of human rationality versus animality and uses it as a moralising mechanism to deter his readers from demonstrating uncontrollable rage in real-life situations, especially in their relations with less powerful people.<sup>85</sup> Similarly in *Chapter 5*, which focused on the *Exhortation to the Study of Medicine*, we have seen that Galen taps into the topic of bestiality, in order to commend the monitoring of damaging passions through the medium of rational judgment. This he sees as morally edifying for the Graeco-Roman elite to whom his works are addressed. In the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, however, he links irrationality with bestiality specifically in order to arouse his audience’s sense of shame.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. Seneca *On the Control of Anger* 1.8: ‘The best plan is to reject straightway the first incentives to anger, to resist its very beginnings, and to take care not to be betrayed into it’; see also 1.15: ‘This is why Socrates said to the slave, “I would strike you, were I not angry.” He put off the correction of the slave to a calmer season; at the moment, he corrected himself. Who can boast that he has his passions under control, when Socrates did not dare to trust himself to his anger?’ See also Plutarch, *De Cob. Ira* 455B-D.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. *PHP* 6.8, 422.20-424.8 DL = 581.11-582.16 K.; *San. Tu.* 2.9, 61.20-34 Ko. = VI.138.2-139.1 K.; *Diff. Feb.* 1.4, VII.283.7-15 K.; *Hipp. Epid.* VI, 4, 26, 242.7-9 Wenkebach = XVIIIB.209.9-11 K. See Singer (2017) on the physical consequences of the affections of the soul and von Staden (2011) specifically on the physiology and therapy of anger from a physical point of view. Cf. van der Eijk (2013: 327–332) on the limits of physical and moral curability in Galen.

<sup>85</sup> ‘For, since human beings have, uniquely among animals, the faculty of reason, if they cast this aside and gratify their rage – that is the life of an animal, not a human being’ (<δπ>ου γάρ μόνος ἀνθρώπος ἐξείρετον ἔχει παρά τὰ ἄλλα τὸ λογίζεσθαι, τοῦτ’ ἐὰν ἀπορρίψας τῷ θυμῷ χαρίζεται, ζῶου, οὐκ ἀνθρώπου βίος), *Aff. Pecc. Dig. 5*, 16.15-18 DB = V.22.18-23.3 K.

### The shame of others and self-shame

In assigning to humans alone the gift of rationality, Galen hammers home the idea that, by achieving gratification through anger, his readers were lowering themselves to the level of animals. The animal imagery is structured around the divide between a reflective human being (φρόνιμον ἄνθρωπον), who attempts to become noble and decent (ἄνθρωπος γενέσθαι καλὸς κἀγαθός), and a wild beast, an image that crops up very frequently in this context. Beyond the actual philosophical overtones here (the desiderative is traditionally seen as an untameable animal), assimilation to a wild beast rhetorically denotes foolishness, and so Galen goes on to label the agent a ‘slave of anger’, which he defines as not being sufficiently free of the affection as to act on the basis of mature consideration (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 16.19-17.1 DB = V.23.3-13 K.). The associations with animality create derogatory innuendos in readers’ minds as a way of discouraging them from embracing what Galen regards as manners unsuitable to humans.

Galen also plays on his addressees’ sense of social esteem by arguing in a rhetorical fashion that they will demonstrate their superiority over everyone else (ἑαυτὸν ἐπιδείξει πάντων ἀνθρώπων βελτίονα) and achieve the greatest honour (τιμήσαντός σου τιμῆς σεαυτὸν μεγίστης), if they manage to stay free from anger (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 17.2-4 DB = V.23.14-17 K.). Here the author seems on a first level to be espousing the Stoic model of *apatheia*, complete abstention from passions. However, in the context of his exposition what he really wants to emphasise is not the strict application of a theoretical doctrine on the eradication of emotions, but rather the ability of the moral agent to contain unrelenting affections, as we have seen in [Chapter 4](#). In my reading, Galen does not go on to talk about the moderation of passions in this section of the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* (though he does that slightly later in the work),<sup>86</sup> because he tailors the content and style of his narrative to the credentials of his readers, who are depicted as having a rather crude sense of moral consciousness and falling short of the philosophical mindset required to have a full grasp of the workings of passions. So for Galen it is more vital to address such readers in a very direct way (‘Abstain from the passion!’), without taking

<sup>86</sup> This occurs in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 19.1-7 DB = V.6, 26.17-27.6 K. Here Galen refers explicitly to the taming of the non-rational capacity of the spirited, which is meant to co-exist with the rational principle of the soul, staying under constant check. This attests to Galen’s adoption of Platonic bipartition. Indeed, a few lines below he explicitly says that the non-rational capacity should not be eliminated, referring to his *Character Traits*; *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 19.8-10 DB = V.6.27.6-9 K.

into account the niceties of complex philosophical differentiation in the use of affect-related terms.

That Galen's advice is very pragmatic rather than speculative is seen in the fact that he then proceeds to distinguish between *appearing* to be morally superior and *actually* being so, which flags up the issue of false reputation as opposed to reality in social interactions in Galen's time (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 17.5-6 DB = V.23.17-24.3 K.; see also [Chapter 8](#)). For Galen it is absolutely fundamental that the person should remain faithful to his decision to practise self-honour, a course which is genuine and self-determined, and avoid giving false impressions to others and above all to oneself (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 18.3-4 DB = V.25.7-8 K.). In fact, the issue of social affectation and moral genuineness seems to form the core of Galen's ensuing recommendation that the addressee should leave the door of his house constantly open and allow free entrance to all acquaintances, which underscores the notion of moral exposure and therefore alertness (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 5, 18.14-25 DB = V.26.2-16 K.). The rationale behind this admonition is that, just as agents protect their image in the public space, they should also be mindful of their inner condition in the private sphere as well. In other words, social shame should have a counterpart in a person's relation to the self too. Exposing oneself to public scrutiny as a sign of moral propriety especially in private affairs features in other popular philosophical works, such as Plutarch's *Political Precepts* 800F-801A, but in the passage from Galen referred to above it is directly used as a moralising device to help the reader keep the non-rational principle of the soul in constant check.

### Situational ethics: Dietetics as a moralising space

Somewhere half-way through the essay, Galen cross-references his work on *Character Traits* to substantiate his discussion of the proper monitoring of the desiderative faculty of the soul (*epithymētikon*), that is the one connected with bodily pleasures, impulses and desires (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 19.8ff DB = V.27.6 ff K.).<sup>87</sup> The considerable length of this section and its technical character, which is at odds with the popular philosophical nature of what comes before and indeed after it, leads us to assume that this is a non-functional detour and presumably represents a later addition to the text by Galen during the revision stage of the oral version.<sup>88</sup> This

<sup>87</sup> Specifically on the desiderative soul in Galen, see De Lacy (1988).

<sup>88</sup> In line with Singer (2013: 261, n. 136); cf. Gill (2010: 268).

suggestion is backed up by a) the awkward recapitulation of the role of the candid critic and other psychotherapeutic tactics already sufficiently covered in the work (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 20.32-21.10 DB = V.30.3-18 K.), b) the almost complete absence of popular philosophical components, such as edifying stories (*exempla*) and proverbs, which are now replaced by a relatively processed theoretical account, and c) the fact that the Galenic moralism is now strictly hortatory, communicated in the second-person singular, and focuses on the author's (conceited) notion of himself as a moral philosopher for all men (e.g. *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 20.16-17 DB = V.29.11-13 K.), having dropped the dynamics it previously employed that were based on a range of strategies aiming at bringing about ethical reform.

That said, the discussion of the desiderative soon gets linked to a number of guidelines on how one should eat and drink especially in the context of a dinner party. Galen now amply spells out what he expounds less explicitly in the naturalistic accounts of *The Capacities of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body* and *Matters of Health* regarding dietetics as a site of moral education (Chapter 2), with a notable degree of conceptual coherence between what he says in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* and these two works. As I will go on to show, his thematic turn towards dietetics in *Affections and Errors of the Soul* points to Galen's interest in situational ethics, i.e. social or cultural occasions that provide opportunities for behavioural training, habituation to a specific form of conduct, and therefore moral progress. From *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 21.11 DB = V.31.18 K. onwards the discussion centres on how to cure oneself of gluttony and drunkenness, among other things, just as one should become accustomed to practising freedom from anger. So, with the focus firmly on passions that affect the desiderative soul, Galen proceeds to show that daily events such as meals and eating in the company of others, which were deeply entrenched in the realities and social habits of his Graeco-Roman wealthy addressees, can be morally challenging:

And therefore another person must watch over us, to ensure that we do not make the same spectacle of insatiable gobbling of food as dogs, or gulp down a cold drink like someone in the throes of continuous fever, in a way unbecoming a man of dignity. Even when one is hungry, it is not appropriate to gobble in a violent and insatiable manner; nor, if one is thirsty, should one drink down a whole goblet in one go. How much less should a luxurious appetite lead one to indulge more than all one's fellow diners in cake or any other rich food. In all these situations, when beginning the process we should call upon others to observe any errors we make, and tell them to us; later on, let us conduct the observation upon ourselves, even

without tutors, and let us take care that we take less food than all our fellow diners, and that we abstain from the rich foods, and take a moderate amount of the healthy ones.<sup>89</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 21.12-22.2 DB = V.31.2-16 K.

Regulation by others and afterwards self-discipline at the table is what is advocated, with a number of moral ploys that Galen uses elsewhere being in evidence here as well: e.g. the animal analogy of the covetous dog, which is designed to discourage readers from insatiability as a reprehensible form of eating behaviour, or the notion of public appearance that conditions the way the moral agent is perceived and evaluated by his fellow-citizens in the context of the dinner party. Later on, Galen helps readers internalise appropriate ethical attitudes by warning them not to succumb to unnecessary competition with or envy of their fellow diners in respect of the self-restrained consumption of food and drink: 'And after a while I would say that you should not even consider the amount consumed by your fellow diners; for it is no great achievement to be more restrained than they with regard to food and drink (μέγα γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκείνων ἐσθίειν τε καὶ πίνειν ἐγκρατέστερον)' (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 22.3-5 DB = V.31.16-32.1 K.). The idea is to stay focused on one's eating behaviour, minimising any self-centred pride that might arise from practising moderation. Indeed, self-understanding and self-examination form the basis of Galen's moralising programme here:

If you have learnt truly to esteem yourself, consider whether you are more restrained in your daily regime yesterday or today. Following this practice you will become conscious each day that it is easier to abstain from the foods that I have mentioned; and conscious of a greater joy of the soul, if you really are a lover of self-control. *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 22.5-9 DB = V.32.1-6 K.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> ἕτερος οὖν ἡμᾶς ἐπιτηρείτω, μή τί που, καθάπερ οἱ κύνες, ἀπλήστως ὥφθημεν ἐμφορούμενοι σιτίων ἢ ὡς οἱ διακαιόμενοι πυρετῶ συνεχεῖ ψυχρὸν ἐπεσπασάμεθα τὸ πόμα λαβρότερον ἢ ἀνδρὶ σεμνῶ πρέπει. οὔτε γὰρ διὰ πείναν ἐμφορεῖσθαι προσήκει σφοδρῶς καὶ ἀπλήστως, οὔτε διὰ δίψας ὀλην τὴν κύλικα χανδὸν ἐκπίνει, ἔτι δὲ μάλλον οὐδὲ διὰ λιχνείαν ἀπάντων τῶν παρόντων πλέον ἤτοι πλακοῦντος ἢ τινος ἄλλου τῶν λίχνων ὄψων ἀπολαύειν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἅπασιν τούτοις ἀρχομένοις μὲν ἔτι παρακλητέον ἐστὶν ἐτέρους ὃ τι <ἂν> ἀμάρτωμεν ἐπιτηρεῖν τε καὶ λέγειν ἡμῖν, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ χωρὶς παιδαγωγῶν ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐπιτηρώμεν αὐτοὶ καὶ παραφυλάττωμεν, ὅπως ἀπάντων τε τῶν συνδειπνούστων ἔλαττον ὄψου προσεγκώμεθα καὶ τῶν λίχνων ἐδεσμάτων ἀποσχώμεθα, σύμμετρα τῶν ὑγιεινῶν προσαράμενοι.

<sup>90</sup> εἰ δὲ περ ὄντως αὐτὸν ἐγνωκας τιμᾶν, ἐπισκέπτου, <πότερον> μάλλον [ποτε] ἐγκρατῶς διήττησα χθὲς ἢ τήμερον· ἐὰν γὰρ τοῦτο ποιῆς, αἰσθήση καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν εὐκολώτερον, ὧν εἶπον, ἀπεχόμενος, αἰσθήση τε μεγάλα εὐφρανθησόμενος τὴν ψυχὴν, ἐὰν γε σωφροσύνης ὄντως ἐραστής ὑπάρχης.



The introduction of the suggested reflective exercises by Galen is associated with his self-positioning as a moral authority, which provides assurance that the beliefs he commends to his addressee, and by implication to society at large, are morally edifying.

Another remarkable feature of Galen's moral advice in this section is that he attaches positive connotations to what might be seen as morally ambiguous terms. Specifically, he compares the extremes (ἀκρότητα) of drinking too much, overeating and having too much sex, to the peak of self-control (σωφροσύνης ἀκρότητα, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 22.15-17 DB = V.32.13-15 K.).<sup>91</sup> It is interesting that, even though the primary meaning of ἀκρότης (*akrotēs*) as 'extreme' might seem to be opposed to the Aristotelian μεσότης (*mesotēs*, moderation), its metaphorical meaning can be linked to excellence, perfection or the summit of a thing or an activity,<sup>92</sup> so it is positively loaded in a text on ethics. For example, in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1107a6-8, we read 'That is why virtue, as far as its essence and the account stating what it is are concerned, is a mean, but, as far as the best condition and the good result are concerned, it is an extreme'.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, Galen is in favour of a positive, productive kind of competitiveness, the sort that takes place when trainees in philosophy surpass those who are engaged in the same endeavours as them or one that has to do with surpassing oneself (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 6, 22.17-20 DB = V.32.15-33.2 K.). The term used is φιλονεικία (*philoneikia*), which in Galen, as in other Imperial-period authors, predominantly denotes 'love of strife', 'contentiousness', but in this case he opts for the less common meaning, that of 'emulation' and so he is using it in a positive sense.<sup>94</sup> Galen therefore plays with the lexical flexibility of morally-loaded terms. He is happy to harness negative phraseology and transform it into something positive in order to problematise certain moral situations and justify moral disapprobation.

One final point must be discussed in this context. Galen makes a strong case that long-established habit (*ēthos*) will make healthy eating easy and

<sup>91</sup> On sex in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, with comparison to the *Character Traits*, see Ahonen (2017: esp. 465-469).

<sup>92</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>93</sup> διὸ κατὰ μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι λέγοντα μεσότης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετή, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ εὖ ἀκρότης.

<sup>94</sup> LSJ, s.v. On the different uses of the term in Galen, see Singer (2013: 266, n. 168). It is interesting that even in the context of the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, a bit further down in the text, Galen dwells on the derogatory overtones of φιλονεικία, grouping it together with φιλοδοξία ('love of reputation') and φιλαρχία ('love of offices') as serious affections of the soul (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 24.10-11 DB = V.35.10-11 K.).

pleasant, and therefore renders the latter an indispensable part of one's daily regimen. The author is also adamant in his view that the example of a controlled diet can provide a basis for an analogous approach to remedying psychic insatiability. Dietetics was an essential part of ancient medicine, which compared with the other two branches of therapeutics, namely pharmacology and surgery, was the most conspicuous and socially acceptable (e.g. Scribonius Largus, *epistula dedicatoria* 2; Plutarch, *On Friends and Flatterers* 73D). Galen gives us good reasons why this might have been the case by showing that dietetics was indeed an area liable to promote individual and social righteousness. Such opinions crop up time and again in Galen's *Matters of Health*, his dedicated work on the importance of dietetics, a term that includes not just foodstuffs, but, as seen in [Chapter 2](#), a wider range of environmental aspects affecting the body such as exercise, sleep, baths, massage, sexual activity and so on, which the agent ought to enjoy in moderation.<sup>95</sup> So Galen develops the idea that the human being will be happiest, if he is brought up from birth in a regime that prizes the art of hygiene; 'for he will thus gain some benefit for his soul too (εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ὀνίναίτο), since a good daily regime paves the way for good character traits (τῆς χρηστῆς διαίτης ἥθη χρηστὰ παρασκευαζούσης)' (*San. Tu.* 7, 16.2-5 Ko. = VI.31.18-32.5 K.). Elsewhere, it is underlined that the character of the soul is corrupted by bad habits in respect of food, drink or physical exercise, and therefore it is not only the business of the philosopher to shape the character of the soul (πλάττειν ἦθος ψυχῆς) but somehow that of the doctor too, who is often called upon to prevent or correct the deleterious effects that moral affections have on the body (*San. Tu.* 8, 19.24-20.3 Ko. = VI.40.4-17 K.). Galen's identity as a doctor is not involved in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* (cf. the last section of this Chapter), but his contention that bodily and psychic health are interdependent certainly is, as we have seen. This is in tune with Plutarch's *Precepts of Health Care*, a work that combines the demands of health care and the expectations of moral decorum at dinner parties and other outings (e.g. 123D-E) in highly sophisticated ways, as has recently been shown.<sup>96</sup>

Galen's wider image of the physician who infiltrates into the territory of ethics also features in *The Capacities of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the*

<sup>95</sup> On dietetics in early Greek medicine, see Lonie (1977). For a brief history of dietetics in antiquity, see Edelstein (1967: 303-316). On Galen's dietetics, see Romano (2000).

<sup>96</sup> van Hoof (2010: 214-254).

*Body*, as already argued in [Chapter 2](#). Here the same core idea is put forward: since a deficient bodily condition (*krasis*) causes a bad state of the soul, by restoring bodily mixtures, the doctor can achieve psychic stability. Earlier literature has explained this thesis as reflecting Galen's physicalist approach to the therapy of the passions (see [Chapter 2](#)). But beyond that, the ethical layer with which Galen invests these texts hints at his claims to be seen as a moralist, independently of or in conjunction with his authoritative expertise in medicine for which he was best known. An interesting passage in Plutarch's *Precepts of Health Care* 122B–E dramatises a contemporary discussion as to whether the two groups (physicians and philosophers) should have distinct areas of specialisation and knowledge or whether some 'blurring of boundaries' (σύγχυσις ὄρων, 122C) could be permissible. Galen seems to be responding to the ongoing debate over the demarcation of the duties of doctors and philosophers, and suggesting that his medical role should not (and does not) preclude his competence in the field of ethics. In this way he also bolsters his general self-image of the physician-cum-philosopher, specifically disposed to ethics as much as to logic and physics. We will see that this holds true for *Prognosis* ([Chapter 8](#)) too, where once again Galen casts himself as a moral authority, notwithstanding his more developed medical image in this text.

This proposal is consistent with Galen's ideas about specialisation, which he endorsed in an inclusive way, i.e. not excluding contributions from specialists in other disciplines. He often argues that specific topics need, ideally, to be discussed by professionals from the corresponding field. However, he does welcome the input of other professional groups on given topics, provided that their approach is rational and methodologically sound, thus acknowledging the advantages of an interdisciplinary approach to specialisation. So, for example, in *Matters of Health* he states that hygiene should ideally be discussed by physicians and gymnastic trainers, though it was often dealt with by philosophers too. In the *Construction of the Embryo* he says that this topic should be tackled by physicians, though philosophers have attempted to give an opinion on it too. In *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* he mentions that the powers that govern animals should be examined by both philosophers and physicians. And the same emphases obtain in the introduction to the *Diagnosis by the Pulse* (*Dig. Puls.* 1.1, VIII.766.3–767.7 K.). This shows that Galen does not favour rigid segregation of areas of expertise, which at any rate did not form part of the public perception of the doctor's identity in antiquity either. As Nutton remarks: 'The boundary between the self-acknowledged doctor and the educated layman was very narrow. The distance that separated a

Galen from a Cornelius Celsus or a Seneca is far less than that between a modern cardiologist and the average G.P.<sup>97</sup>

### Moral emulation

In another section of the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, Galen turns to a detailed analysis of the passion of distress or grief (*lypē*), having re-confirmed his status as an expert in matters ethical. Specifically, by means of self-effacement – a favourite technique in the proem to the text and an enduring authorising gesture in the knowledge-ordering culture of the Imperial period –<sup>98</sup> he claims in feigned ignorance that if there is any other way by which one could become a noble man, he would be happy to accept it, but otherwise his addressee(s) should stick to his own method of diagnosis and treatment of passions, until a better one is discovered (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 24.4-10 DB = V.35.3-10 K.). This passage resembles an earlier one, i.e. *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 2, 6.16-24 DB = V.6.17-7.9 K. (see part 3 of this Chapter), which it revisits. As I have argued above, the gist of this passage was to urge readers to actively explore other possible therapeutic methods. However, here Galen's method is specifically called 'common to all', suggesting that its application is universally acceptable and efficient, thus potentially restricting any unnecessary searching on the reader's part. Moreover, Galen's affectation is also evinced in his ostentatious pretence of humility, when he says that he expects people whom he has benefitted morally to 'return the favour, with some reciprocal benefit and teaching' (παρακαλῶν ἀντιδιδόναι τε καὶ ἀντοινάναι τι καὶ ἀντιδιδάσκειν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 24.7-8 DB = V.35.6-7 K.), a statement that is at odds with the way Galen goes on in the text to present himself as a didactic paradigm of firm resistance to distress. It seems he barely needs any help from others. This image of him occurs in the context of a story about a young man who used to easily get upset over minor issues and therefore visited Galen for advice.

A number of components in this story cast light on the primary features of Galenic moralism:

- a. The young age of the person who approaches Galen is linked to the intensity of the passion. This squares with Galen's – and other

<sup>97</sup> G.P. stands for 'General Practitioner'. Nutton (1985: 38). Cf. König (2005: 254–300).

<sup>98</sup> König (2017: 8).

moralists' – view that there are affections that are especially predictable in young men.<sup>99</sup>

- b. The story is acted out as a narrative with dramatic time and space within which the characters operate, as well as a determinant event, a turning point in the plot, as it were. In this case, the young man has a sudden realisation of his condition (κατανοήσας τοῦτο, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 25.16 DB = V.37.6 K.), which leads him to stay awake all night and visit Galen first thing in the morning to find out the reason for Galen's own immunity to distress.
- c. From what we learn from this brief story, the young man is an acquaintance of Galen's, who must have known him very well, as he remembered (εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἀφικέσθαι, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 25.18 DB = V.37.8 K.) the general pattern of Galen's response to grief. This ties in with the close rapport Galen sets up between himself as moral advisor and his actual and intended readership in general, and the role of moral anamnesis in ethical progress (Chapter 4).

This ethical case history is not as fully fleshed-out as the one with Galen's Cretan friend, but it does include two of the basic features of a unified 'conversion narrative',<sup>100</sup> i.e. background (description of the passion) and crisis (self-realisation of the condition). The resolution, or the outcome of the young man's encounter with Galen, is not explicitly addressed, though the amplification of Galen's therapeutic advice may be assumed to have steered the young man towards restraining his grief.

The elements of the story outlined above stress Galen's impact as a moral teacher and lead him to make a firm declaration that natural inclinations are important in childhood as is emulation of fine exemplars, whereas at a later stage the important factors are doctrines and training (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 25.21-24 DB = V.37.12-14 K.). I have discussed in Chapter 4 above the educational triad Galen envisages here as well as any discrepancies observed between this text and *Avoiding Distress*. For present purposes, I would like to touch briefly on the role of moral emulation here, which has important ramifications for Galen's moralising role and the function of emulation as a staple of his moral agenda.

The relevant passage focuses on the portrayal of Galen's parents' characters, pointedly contrasting the two as role models for Galen during his formative period:

<sup>99</sup> See, e.g. *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 7, 26.12-13 DB = V.38.11-13 K., where young men are described as naturally prone to becoming easily distressed, enraged and luxury-loving.

<sup>100</sup> Mattern (2008a: 67).

I did have the great good fortune to have a father who was to an extraordinary degree free from anger, just, good and generous; but I had a mother whose irascibility was so extreme that she would sometimes bite her maids. She was perpetually shouting and fighting with my father, even more so than Xanthippe with Socrates. Thus, as I saw alongside each other the fine qualities of my father's deeds and the ugly affections to which my mother was subject, I was moved to warmth and love for the former, and avoidance and hatred of the latter. I observed a very great difference between my parents in this respect; and so too in the fact that my father never appeared distressed at any setback, while my mother would suffer grief at the smallest occurrence. You probably realise yourself the way in which children imitate those things in which they take pleasure, but avoid what they do not enjoy watching.<sup>101</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 27.22-28.8 DB = V.40.15-41.9 K.

The superlatives used to refer to the character traits of the father and the mother emphasise the extreme nature of each one's behaviour, in a positive and a negative light respectively. Above all, the graphic description of the mother's conduct, with its focus on the way her passions are enacted through biting, shouting and fighting, is suitably linked to the disapprobation of her attitude on Galen's part, who aesthetically calls her affections 'ugly', as opposed to his father's 'fine' deeds. Jim Hankinson has emphasised the pointed use of the ethically-related terminology assigned to the two parents, referring to the father's deeds (*erga*) as opposed to the mother's affections (*pathe*), to highlight that the power of voluntary action in Galen is specific to the rational soul.<sup>102</sup> The same, I think, can be said about another key element in the above passage, namely that Galen, from the standpoint of a moral recipient this time (and not a moral leader), is cast as able to embrace or avoid a pattern of behaviour only after careful observation and critical parallelism of moral positions he encounters in others (παράλληλά τε ὁρῶντί μοι).<sup>103</sup> Therefore, deliberate individual

<sup>101</sup> Ἐγὼ τοίνυν, ὅπως μὲν τὴν φύσιν εἶχον, οὐκ ἔχω φάναι (τὸ γὰρ ἑαυτὸν γινῶναι χαλεπὸν ἔστι καὶ τοῖς τελείοις ἀνδράσι, μὴ τί γε δὴ τοῖς παισίν), εὐτύχησα δὲ μεγάλην εὐτυχίαν, ἀοργητότατον μὲν καὶ δικαιοτάτον καὶ χρηστότατον καὶ φιλανθρωπότατον ἔχων πατέρα, μητέρα δ' ὀργιλωτάτην, ὡς δάκνειν μὲν ἐνίοτε τὰς θεραπαίνας, αἰεὶ δὲ κεκραγένας τε καὶ μάχεσθαι τῷ πατρὶ μᾶλλον ἢ Ξανθίππῃ Σωκράτει. παράλληλά τε ὁρῶντί μοι τὰ καλὰ τῶν τοῦ πατρὸς ἔργων τοῖς αἰσχροῖς πάθεσι τῆς μητρὸς ἐπῆει τὰ μὲν ἀσπάζεσθαι τε καὶ φιλεῖν, τὰ δὲ φεύγειν καὶ μισεῖν. ὥσπερ δ' ἐν τούτοις ἐώρων παμπόλλην διαφορὰν τῶν γονέων, οὕτω κἀν τῷ <φαίνεσθαι> τὸν μὲν ἐπὶ μηδεμιᾷ ζημίᾳ λυπούμενον, ἀνιωμένην <δ'> ἐπὶ σμικροτάτοις τὴν μητέρα. γινώσκεις δὲ δῆπου καὶ σὺ τοὺς παῖδας, οἷς μὲν ἂν ἡσθῶσι, ταῦτα μιμουμένους, ἃ δ' ἂν ἀηδῶς ὁρῶσι φεύγοντας.

<sup>102</sup> Hankinson (1993: 207–209). Cf. Harris (2001: 271–272), who suggests that in this episode too Galen shows a proclivity to fictionalise his mother's rage.

<sup>103</sup> The use of verbs of vision in the quoted extract in particular speak to Galen's firm belief that 'Those things of which we are eyewitnesses are better than paradigmatic examples' (ἀμείνω δὲ τῶν παραδειγμάτων ἔστιν ὧν αὐτόπται γεγόναμεν, *MM* 9.4, X.608.15–16 K.). Cf. Seneca, *Letter* 6.5,

decision-making, especially by closely examining opposing morals, is a crucial part of sober philosophical teaching and learning (see also Chapter 3).

Critical thinking is indeed presented as a constant in the process of moral education. This is demonstrated both by the fact that Galen's father conducted, on his son's behalf, a scrutiny of the lifestyle and doctrines of Galen's teachers (τοῦ τε βίου καὶ τῶν δογμάτων ἐξέτασιν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 28.17-19 DB = V.42.3-4 K.) and by the fact that in a speech put into the mouth of Galen's father in this context, the paternal figure advocates cautious study and judgment of philosophical approaches that will help Galen increase his virtues of justice, self-control, courage and independent thinking (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 28.25-29.6 DB = V.42.11-18 K.). The combined ethical and intellectual excellence of Galen's father squares with the traditional way a philosopher would normally be identified in the Imperial period.<sup>104</sup> This explains why Galen is eager to reproduce his father's distinctive features also in *Good Humour and Bad Humour*, where this time the emphasis is on the extent to which his father, in fact, exceeds the traditional philosophical model: 'My father reached the point at which he was extremely competent in geometry, architecture, arithmetic, mathematics and astronomy, and admired by everybody who knew him for his justice, goodness and temperance – like none of the philosophers.'<sup>105</sup>

The beneficial impact of Galen's father on him is given some prominence as the text proceeds, through a description of the moralising

who also underscores the importance of living examples to look up to. See also Philodemus, *On Anger* col. 1.20-27 Indelli.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. Alcinoüs, *Manual of Platonic Doctrine (Didaskalikos)* 1.2-3: 'The term "philosopher" is derived from "philosophy" in the same way as "musician" from "music". The first necessity is that he be naturally apt at those branches of learning which have the capacity to fit him for, and lead him towards, the knowledge of intelligible being, which is not subject to error or change. Next, he must be enamoured of the truth, and in no way tolerate falsehood. Furthermore, he must also be endowed with a temperate nature, and, in relation to the passionate part of the soul, he must be naturally restrained. For he who devotes himself to the study of reality and turns his desires in that direction would not be impressed by (bodily) pleasures. The prospective philosopher must also be endowed with liberality of mind, for nothing is so inimical as small-mindedness to a soul which is proposing to contemplate things divine and human. He must also possess natural affinity for justice, just as he must towards truth and liberality and temperance; and he should also be endowed with a ready capacity to learn and a good memory, for these too contribute to the formation of the philosopher.' (trans. Dillon 1993); with Trapp (2017).

<sup>105</sup> *Bon. Mal. Suc.* 1.15, 69 Ieraci Bio = VI.755.12-16 K.: ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ πατὴρ ἐγένετο γεωμετρίας μὲν καὶ ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς καὶ λογιστικῆς ἀριθμητικῆς τε καὶ ἀστρονομίας εἰς ἄκρον ἤκων, ὑπὸ πάντων δὲ τῶν γνόντων αὐτὸν ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ χρηστότητι καὶ σωφροσύνη θαυμασθεὶς ὡς οὐδεὶς τῶν φιλοσόφων. Pace Singer (2014a: 10), who interprets the passage from *Good Humour and Bad Humour* cited above as an act of 'self-exclusion' on Galen's part. Cf. [Gal.], *Ther. Pis.* 1, 4.4-18 Boudon-Millot = XIV.212.10-213.5 K.

dynamics between the two parties. We read that Galen took *specific instructions* (my emphasis) from his father which he still observed (ἐγὼ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς λαβὼν τὰς ἐντολὰς ἄχρι δεῦρο διαφυλάττω, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 29.13-14 DB = V.43.6-8 K.), that (like his father) he is fond of making a *vigorous and thorough examination* of philosophical material (σπουδῆ πάσῃ ἀκριβῆ τὴν ἐξέτασιν ἔχω, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 29.15 DB = V.43.9 K.), he follows the moral principles of despising reputation and esteem which his father *accustomed him to* (δόξης τε καὶ τιμῆς ὁ πατὴρ εἶθισέ με καταφρονεῖν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 29.18-19 DB = V.43.13-14 K.), remains unshaken by sudden events because this is the quality *he observed in his father* (ἀνέκπληκτός τε πρὸς τὰ κατὰ τὸν βίον ὁσημέραι συμπίπτοντα διαμένων, ὥσπερ ἐώρων τὸν πατέρα, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 29.15-16 DB = V.43.9-11 K.), always *recalls the paternal counsels* handed down to him (μεμνημένον ὦν ὁ πατὴρ ὑπέθετο, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 30.10 DB = V.44.10-11 K.) and was influenced in his decision-making concerning moral issues by how his father *would define* things, in this case as regards the primary point of material possessions (τοῦτον γὰρ ἐτίθετο πρῶτον ὅρον ἐκεῖνος κτημάτων, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 30.12-13 DB = V.44.13-15 K.). I have gone into some detail about the textual evidence relating to the educational role of Galen's father (italics mine), because I see interesting connections with the way Galen depicts himself throughout the text but also in this context as practising precisely those qualities that shaped his character and contributed to his ethical advancement. Towards the end of the section on his father, Galen addresses the recipient of the essay thus:

Therefore cultivate the argument that I have stated, to this end; remember it, and practise it constantly, investigating whether or not I have spoken the truth, until finally you are as completely convinced of it as of the proposition that two times two is four.<sup>106</sup> *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 30.18-21 DB = V.45.4-6 K.

Regular practice, a good memory, study and careful examination are all recommendations appended to Galen's educational profile, derived from his father's pedagogy, as he himself described it above. The concluding sentence almost coerces the recipient into believing that his moral success is guaranteed only if he follows Galen's advice, just as Galen managed to become the perfect exemplum through his apprenticeship to his father, his

<sup>106</sup> πρὸς ταύτην οὖν ἄσκησον <τὸν> λόγον, ὃν εἶπον ἐγώ, διὰ μνήμης ἔχω καὶ μελετῶν ἀεὶ καὶ σκοπούμενος, εἰ ἀληθεύω, μέχρι περ ἂν τούτῳ πεισθῆς ὡς τῷ τὰ δις δύο τέτταρα εἶναι.



own paradigm. Although traditional in other works of self-improvement (e.g. Plutarch, *De Prof. in Virt.* 84E; Seneca, *Letter* 52.2–3), moral emulation in this Galenic context transcends the textual limits of his work, reflecting the author's anticipated or envisaged role as a moral teacher within his society.

### Insatiability as the aetiology of grief

We have seen in [Chapter 4](#) that in his *Avoiding Distress*, Galen negotiates the passion of grief (*lypē*) that arises from the loss of significant material or other possessions. In the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, he turns his attention to another factor that triggers grief, one that is most appropriate to the upper-class inhabitants of the Roman Empire that he has in mind, i.e. insatiably coveting material possessions.

To begin with, we should note that in this context Galen conceptualises insatiability as 'the most wretched affection of the soul' (ὀρθῶς εἰρησθαι πάθος εἶναι ψυχῆς μοχθηρότατον ἀπληστίαν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 34.16–18 DB = V.51.13–14 K.) and the foundation stone of a series of interrelated moral vices, such as love of money, love of reputation, love of esteem, love of power and love of quarrelling (κρηπίς γάρ τις αὕτη φιλοχρηματίας ἐστὶ καὶ φιλοδοξίας καὶ φιλοτιμίας καὶ φιλαρχίας καὶ φιλονεικίας, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 34.18–19 DB = V.51.14–15 K.). This definition of insatiability, which implicates moral condemnation, reflected in the ethically loaded term μοχθηρότατον, progresses into an associated explanation of the passion, which is calculated to arouse even stronger feelings of revulsion in ancient readers: Galen defines the synonym acquisitiveness (πλεονεξίαν) as the foundation (κρηπίδα) of 'shameless, wanton, tyrannical mistresses' (αἰσχροῖς καὶ ἀσελγέσι καὶ τυραννικαῖς δεσποίνοις), referring to love of money, meanness, love of reputation, love of power and love of esteem; and emphasises how socially repellent (αἰσχροὺν) it is to care for our legal freedom, yet neglect our genuine, natural freedom by turning ourselves into slaves to the above mentioned vices (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 35.15–20 DB = V.53.7–13 K.).

Beyond the theoretical definitions of insatiability provided by Galen and the way they are meant to create feelings of revulsion against this vice by stimulating the readers' self-esteem, as we have seen, there is another tactic at play here, i.e. seeking to prompt Galen's audience to visualise the destructive effects of insatiably feeding the body. This is used as a parallel to the insatiability of the soul. The relatively long physiological description of digestion offered here (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 31.1–12

DB = V.45.8-46.5 K.)<sup>107</sup> is probably the most scientific Galen can get in this essay, giving us for the first time some sort of a glimpse into his identity as a physician.<sup>108</sup> In particular the level of technical detail and the provision of bodily symptoms of indigestion such as diarrhoea or the creation of bad humours in the veins are a window on the author's medical theory of nutrition, as expounded elsewhere in his corpus.<sup>109</sup> This is not to say that Galen breaks the philosophical illusion of his *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, for he is still conscious that he is addressing an audience only some of whom would perhaps have had some tangential knowledge of medicine. That explains his insertion of explanatory asides such as 'the symptom is known as diarrhoea', which shows that Galen makes this technical section reader-friendly to non-experts in physiology or medicine, keeping up with the readership conventions of popular philosophy targeting a wider elite audience.

Yet, what makes the section on nutrition important from a moral point of view is that it gives prominence to two key notions relating to the function of nutrition, which are transferable to the understanding of the proper function of the soul: viz. attention should be paid to a) 'what is moderate' (τὸ σύμμετρον), which is defined on the basis of b) what is necessary (χρεια) or useful (ὠφέλεια) for the body/soul.<sup>110</sup> Overloading the

<sup>107</sup> 'The beginning of our investigation will be provided by the insatiable appetite for nourishment. For consumption of amounts of food beyond what is moderate is described in this way. And the judgment as to what is moderate is derived from the function of nourishment. Its function is to nourish the body; this will be accomplished if it is well digested; and it will be well digested if the amount is moderate – great amounts, as we know, remain undigested. And if this ever happens, then the function of the nourishment is necessarily lost. Also, if the stomach evacuates everything because it has been hurt by the biting qualities of undigested food substances, the symptom is known as diarrhoea, and here too the function of the food is destroyed. For we do not take food in order to pass it through the intestines, but so that it may be added to each part of the body. And if it is distributed through the body without having been digested properly, this causes bad humour in the veins.' Philosophical 'digestion' is used in moral works to emphasise the need for proper internalising of philosophical principles leading to the transformation of one's character. See Sellars (2009: 121–122).

<sup>108</sup> Which is still concealed however, for he could have made a cross-reference to a technical work, for example, if he really wanted to disclose his medical identity.

<sup>109</sup> *Nat. Fac.* 1.8-13, III.114.6-122.16 Helmreich = II.18.15-30.5 K. (generally on nutrition); *Nat. Fac.* 3.5, III.215.6-216.8 Helmreich = II.157.15-159.6 K. (on the eliminative quality, bringing about diarrhoea and vomiting).

<sup>110</sup> *Symmetron* is a central notion in Galen's understanding of the proper functioning of the body with wider applicability to other areas. In the *Exercise with the Small Ball*, he states: 'For I censure lack of proportion in all cases (τὴν γὰρ ἀμετρίαν ἐγὼ πανταχοῦ ψέγω). Proportion is the aim to be cultivated in every art (καὶ πᾶσαν τέχνην ἀσκεῖν φημι χρῆναι τὸ σύμμετρον); any loss in this respect is a defect (κἂν εἴ τι μέτρον στερεῖται, τοῦτ' οὐκ εἶναι καλόν)', *Parv. Pil.* 3, I.98.18-21 Marquardt = V.906.1-3 K. Cf. *San. Tu.* 5.2, 138.16-139.4 = VI.313.3-314.13 K., where *symmetra* (balanced) is coupled with moderate (*metria*) to refer to a mean between excess and deficiency, and

body with unnecessary foodstuffs is likened to lusting after possessions such as pearls, pieces of sardonyx and other precious stones, garments interwoven with gold or made of silk. Galen is here insinuating that these material goods are not conducive to one's psychic health, because they promote uncontrollable greed, and so he provides another inventory that groups together possessions beneficial to the body, to help readers understand the kind of thing they should really be after in taking care of their soul: i.e. objects by which we are nourished, clothed or shod, houses, and things which are of use to the sick such as olive oil (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 31.12-26 DB = V.46.5-47.5 K.). By establishing, through this parallelism, the quantitative principle in the possession of goods, just like his father had done in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 8, 30.12-13 DB = V.44.13-15 K. as noted above, Galen also draws a line between things we should opt for, if we are wise, and others we should not. So while the possession of one pair of shoes is necessary and useful, the possession of another five or ten pairs is superfluous and useless (περιττόν τε καὶ ἄχρηστον, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 32.2-3 DB = V.47.7-8 K.), and the same goes for clothing, servants and utensils. This distinction in a sense echoes the Stoic demarcation between preferred and dispreferred indifferents, which I think makes more sense in a subsequent passage, where Galen defines the opposite of covetousness, i.e. self-sufficiency, as being really 'up to us' (ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοί), a factor we can control in Stoic theory, unlike wealth which is the result of luck and not virtue (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 33.20-22 DB = V.50.1-4 K.). Galen's moral advice in favour of self-sufficiency, however, is not unpragmatic by recommending, for example, an ascetic attitude to external goods. It is noteworthy that, because he himself, as well as his immediate and implied audience, comes from the aristocratic echelons of Imperial society, it would have been paradoxical to propose eliminating externals in line with an Epicurean or Cynic perspective. What he suggests instead is staying within certain boundaries in line with the criterion of usefulness.<sup>111</sup>

The text makes it clear that Galen is a practical man in the society in which he lives and writes. He appreciates the high standards and

where *symmetria* (moderation) is contrasted to *ametria* (excess). In similar vein, in *Ars Med.* 2, 278.10-279.13 Boudon-Millot = I.309.16-311.3 K. *symmetron* and *symmetria* are coupled with *eukraton* and *eukrasia* in the definition of a healthy body, just as *asymmetron* and *asymmetria* go with *dyskrasia* with reference to disease. In *Opt. Sect.* 26, I.180.13-14 K. *symmetron* is useful whereas *ametron* is harmful.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Gill (2018: 140), who sees the stance of Galen's father in being in favour of self-sufficiency as 'neutral between philosophical theories, and ... presented as a kind of "consensus-position", shared also by non-philosophers'.

expectations people from his class have, namely the possession of additional wealth and their aspirations for social and political recognition, and advises accordingly. His teaching is also enmeshed in social critique of his class (a common feature of his moralism, as we will see in the next two Chapters), targeted especially against those who have embraced a life of indulgence (τὸν ἀπολαυστικὸν . . . βίον, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 32.9-10 DB = V.47.15-16 K.), spending up to thirty times more than necessary.

Self-projection also shines through in this section, as Galen again becomes a paragon for the addressee. Although both parties are described as having equal opportunities as regards the possession of and access to material wealth (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 32.5-8 DB = V.47.10-15 K.),<sup>112</sup> the author sets up a glaring contrast between them: Galen is not distressed when he spends his inheritance discharging other people's debts, nor when he does not put aside any surplus amount, whereas the addressee does suffer distress, despite his property growing and his not spending any money on good works or investing in the purchase of books or the training of scribes (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 32.12-33.2 DB = V.48.1-16 K.). Perhaps one reason for Galen's cheerfulness is that he indulges in 'moral' investment, notable euergetism, unlike his addressee, as the text makes clear. That is consistent with Galen's ensuing reprimanding of the addressee with the remark that the latter's insatiability is out of control, since he is not content with being even richer than 120,000 other people, but wishes to be the wealthiest person of all. Galen concludes that by adopting this attitude, the addressee will be perpetually 'poor' because of his boundless desires. So what he proposes is that the addressee should persuade himself that he is rich and so he need not be distressed over any financial losses. The same result will come about if the addressee rationalises his greed for esteem (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 33.28-34.16 DB = V.50.10-51.13 K.).

The psychotherapeutic training proposed by Galen rests primarily on the use of doctrines concerning the importance of self-sufficiency as opposed to the dangers resulting from greed. Galen considers the application of such doctrines a secure pathway to freedom from distress, as he regards this technique as being 'entirely up to us' (πᾶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 34.23-24 DB = V.52.3-4 K.). On another level, however, the use of suitable doctrines also has implications for the way Galenic psychotherapy

<sup>112</sup> Singer (2013: 276, n. 213) remarks that the first-person plural pronoun ἡμῖν in this section is too vague to allow us to determine whether Galen is referring to himself or to a group of people including his addressee. Nonetheless, in the light of Galen's ensuing statement 'But, in your case, I observe that you follow a similar way of life to my own' (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 32.11-12 DB = V.47.18-48.1 K.), it is more reasonable to argue in favour of the latter possibility.

is presented as simple, optimistic and accessible to all. Galen is clear that people who had not had the chance to be trained in similar doctrines in their early education should not despair, because now they could follow Galen's suggested path (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 9, 34.26-35.2 DB = V.52.7-9 K.). Therefore, Galen's pedagogical burden is presented as a decent counterpart to early training for any late comers. His moral agenda is also reachable to a wide group of people because, as the text suggests, Galen developed his ethical discourse not just to his addressee but also to many others on subsequent occasions, persuading them and bringing long-term moral benefits (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 35.5-7 DB = V.52.13-16 K.).

A short story is inserted here to drive home the point. It concerns a man prone to luxury, sex, love of reputation and esteem who suffers from grief because he cannot satisfy his desires, given that he is not wealthy. Having observed Galen's cheerfulness, he asks him to teach him how to overcome grief. But the story makes clear that Galen is unable to help this person, since it takes a lot of time to heal deeply rooted passions (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 35.26-36.9 DB = V.54.3-14 K.). Although Galen sympathises with people who have moral failings, in his suggested psychotherapy sudden character change is not an option (as it is not elsewhere, e.g. in Plutarch).<sup>113</sup> This substantiates Galen's warning about maintaining moral alertness and proactiveness. Finally, this story also points to what Galen sees as a desirable social response to ethical progress in other people. The emphasis is on it being in everyone's interests to have healthy companions to associate with, since these will become beneficial friends (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 36.10-13 DB = V.54.15-55.1 K.), therefore providing a humanistic perspective through which to approach moral development.

## Conclusion

The *Affections and Errors of the Soul* is the longest of Galen's surviving ethical works and therefore provides us with unprecedented insights into the author's moralising endeavour. Compared with other ancient moral works treating the well-being of the soul and especially the therapy of anger and greed, it might seem unsophisticated to modern tastes: its psychotherapeutic discourse is not as refined as that developed by Seneca or Plutarch, for example. The essay has far fewer quotations and proverbs from popular or high philosophy and therefore seems to be lacking the

<sup>113</sup> Xenophontos (2016a: 22-41).

necessary trademark of a popular philosophical treatise; it shows signs of sloppy repetitions of the practical rules one should follow to achieve self-mastery, and the author's moral outlook in this respect might look hard to understand in terms of its overall structure and occasionally its content. Having said that, it is likewise important to note that this work is a serious attempt on Galen's part to enter the realm of practical ethics without being a professional luminary in this area. He is the first doctor to offer a systematic psychotherapy by means of popular philosophical essays and to occupy himself with the wider area of practical and not just medical ethics. Consequently, any modern scholarly approach that assesses the work only on its form and register is unlikely to be helpful or, for that matter, conducive to an overall appreciation of the Galenic moral ontology.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, it is the idiosyncratic character that Galen brings to the essay and which is an integral part of a distinctively Galenic moral discourse that should be at the centre of modern scholarly appreciations.

In this Chapter we have encountered a wide range of moralising devices utilised by Galen in a kind of life coaching aimed at restraining wild passions. This is the sort of teaching an upper-class member of society was expected to benefit from through the contemporary Hellenic literary culture (*paideia*), which equipped them with the capacity for rational, philosophical self-management. As we have seen, for Galen it is not simply important to list what the moral agent can or should do to achieve happiness, but also to engage their good will, encourage critical thinking and learning through imitation of model persons and attitudes, even if, on occasion, that meant using rhetorical manipulation, evoking an over-inflated sense of self-authorisation or a cynical approach to expose moral defects. These are all part and parcel of Galen's project of philosophical therapy, which catered to an audience with a highly developed awareness of social honour/shame, as we have seen. This puts him in a position to play with the social expectations of his elite audience by inculcating in them appropriate moral patterns so as to regulate their character. For example, we have seen that overreacting in anger or being greedy are key pieces of moral advice for the educated audience of Galen's era, who were expected to be self-composed instead.

The very last section of Book 1 of the *Affections and Errors of the Soul* is enlightening in bringing out the staples of Galen's ethical programme: given that self-absorption extinguishes discernment and good decision-making, it is necessary to consult judicious councillors on important issues.

<sup>114</sup> E.g. Singer (2013: 216).

These people should be fearless in expressing their criticism openly, which the moral agents should be willing to accept with gratitude. However, it is in the end up to the agent to reach a state of self-realisation and to use the power of reason to monitor any bewildering passions. Although in other parts of the work, Galen highlights the destructive effects of self-love, in the conclusion love of self is exonerated from blame as being a crucial step towards truly becoming a noble person and not just appearing to be one. A significant element of Galen's moral perspective is that the agent should never lose hope in the process of moral correction, which ties in with the optimism we have observed elsewhere in the text (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 36.14-37.23 DB = V.55.1-57.3 K.), despite the fact that advanced age or other factors are sometimes seen as an impediment to moral improvement.<sup>115</sup>

Even more interesting is that the concluding section re-introduces some key moralising means Galen has stressed just before the end of the essay: anamnesis, in the sense of recollection of critical moral advice, chastisement, encouragement and setting up moral models are all components which Galen has exploited in his text. He has reminded his addressee of autobiographical incidents from his own youth, scolded him for being greedy, advised him to place himself under the guidance of an advisor and later encouraged him to develop self-understanding. And all this Galen did while setting himself up as a paradigm for his readers. The depth and breadth of Galenic moral geography and his creative adoption and adaptation of traditional popular philosophy is what marks it out as an important contribution to the history of Graeco-Roman practical ethics.

<sup>115</sup> See the incident with the young man susceptible to luxury, sex, reputation and esteem whom Galen could not heal due to the advanced state of his passions in *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 10, 35.26-36.9 DB = V.54.3-14 K. Likewise, see Book 2 of *Aff. Pecc. Dig.*, 3, 51.16-22 DB = V.75.5-12 K.

*Recognising the Best Physician*

We have seen in other parts of this book that, in contrast to mainstream trends that disputed the cultural significance of medicine in the Roman Imperial period,<sup>1</sup> Galen ranks it as the highest of the liberal arts, mostly by emphasising its positive moral role. For him medicine is a lifelong calling which contributes to man's ethical improvement, releasing him from his bestial, sub-human nature (*Protr.* 14, 116.20-117.18 B. = 1.38.9-39.10 K.). His naturalistic works, as shown in [Chapter 2](#), even put medicine and the physician centre-stage, linking them to character shaping and the management of detrimental passions. Elsewhere, Galen goes beyond individual ethics to foreground the social advantages of medicine. He asserts that its ultimate aim is to benefit mankind (εὐεργεσίας ἀνθρώπων ἕνεκεν, *Opt. Med.*, 288.5 Boudon-Millot = 1.57.10-11 K.) by healing humans through philanthropy (*PHP* 9.5, 564.30 DL = V.751.17-752.1 K.) or performing acts of kindness (*Hipp. Epid. I*, 1a, 94.4-6 Vagelpohl). Those practising the medical art who sought personal gain were not true physicians but mere drug dealers (*Opt. Med.* 291.17-21 Boudon-Millot = 1.61.11-15 K.) who, in Galen's view, distorted medicine's humanitarian character (*Opt. Med.* 287.7-10 Boudon-Millot = 1.56.10-13 K.). All this shows that Galen conceptualised medicine's *philanthrōpia* as an activity with the broadest possible appeal,<sup>2</sup> an occupation for humanity at large, which buttresses the ethical orientation and impact he had claimed for it.

<sup>1</sup> In seeing medicine as part of the rational and honourable arts, Galen clearly diverges from Marcus Aurelius, who classified medicine under the banausic crafts instead (*Mediations* 6.35). A similar indication of the low status of medicine in the Roman period is found in Plutarch's *Precepts on Health Care* 122D-E, where medicine does not seem to belong to the educational canon of the trivium and quadrivium of that age; see Pleket (1995: 32-33), Kudlien (1988: 63-64).

<sup>2</sup> Galen's definition of *philanthrōpon* as an activity of wider social appeal is attested, for instance, in his *Exercise with the Small Ball*, where he recommends the exercise as 'the only one which is so "matey" (*philanthrōpon*) that even the poorest man need not despair of equipping himself for it' (*Parv. Pil.* 2, 1.94.18-20 Marquardt = V.901.4-6 K.; transl. Singer 1997). Cf. also Eichholz's (1959: 70) remark:



In *Recognising the Best Physician*, which survives only in an Arabic translation<sup>3</sup> that is generally considered to reproduce Galen's spirit and letter faithfully, the excellent physician should not just heal sick bodies, but be actively integrated in the community he lives in in ways that will be explored later. Although this kindheartedness may at least in its essentials go back to the Hippocratic tradition, mainly the deontological works of the later Hellenistic period *Precepts* (esp. ch. 4), *On Decorum* or *Physician* (ch. 1), Galen reinvigorates the notion by transposing it from a purely therapeutic context into a societal and civic one. Even the *Hippocratic Oath* was designed for a restricted fraternity of physicians,<sup>4</sup> whereas Galen's popularising works<sup>5</sup> (whether medical or philosophical) tend to position the function of medicine in a broader communal framework.<sup>6</sup> Galen is acutely interested in participation in public affairs, in the cooperative interaction between fellow-citizens,<sup>7</sup> as well as in how medicine could play a significant role in ensuring the uninterrupted fulfilment of political activity and civic duties.<sup>8</sup>

*Recognising the Best Physician* purportedly discusses the importance of prognosis as a branch of medicine, but pretty much like *Prognosis*, it has little to say about prognostic theory *per se*<sup>9</sup> and more about public critique. The malfunction of the medical community is presented as a reflection of wider social corruption, and unskilled doctors are given the same traits as the 'wicked orators' familiar from the analogies Plato uses to represent and categorise oratory and orators. Galen emulates those analogies to suggest that

'Ideally it is τὸ φιλόνηθρον that is Galen's ultimate criterion in all things, and there is no sign that he fell short of this ideal in the practice of his profession, even if it sometimes eluded him in his other relationships.' For a sense of Galen's philanthropy, see Temkin (1973: 48–50). On philanthropy in Greek medical ethics, see Edelstein (1967: 319–348). See also the parallel from the pseudo-Galenic work *Remedies easily Procured*, where medicine is cast as transcending the limitations of the healing space and the patient's social status. It does not operate only in cities and public places but also in the countryside and the remotest wilderness; it does not serve only noble, wealthy and powerful people but reaches out to everyone in need, being truly public-spirited and multi-purpose (τὸ φιλόνηθρον καὶ πολύχρηστον αὐτῆς, *Rem. Parab.* XIV.311.3–312.3 K.).

<sup>3</sup> The full version of the essay survives in Ḥunayn ibn 'Ishāq's Arabic translation in two manuscripts (Ms. 3813 and Ms. 1120). We also have three excerpts transmitted by Ibn Abī Usaybī'a. On Ḥunayn's intellectual activity and its context, see Meyerhof (1926).

<sup>4</sup> Nutton (1992: 19). <sup>5</sup> In contrast to his strictly technical works.

<sup>6</sup> For example, *San. Tu.* 5.2, 136.21–24 Ko. = VI.308.15–309.1 K.: 'I was a slave to the duties of my profession, and made myself useful in many ways to my friends, kinsmen, and townfolk; and spent the greater part of each night awake, sometimes because of my sick patients, and sometimes for the sake of all that is good in study.'

<sup>7</sup> Galen refers specifically to taking proper care of the public interest (τῶν τῆς πόλεως πραγμάτων προνοεῖσθαι προσηκόντως) and acting with justice and sociability towards relatives, citizens and strangers (συγγενέσι καὶ πολίταις καὶ ξένοις προσφέρεσθαι δικαίως τε καὶ κοινωνικῶς), *PHP* 9.7, 588.16–18 DL = V.780.11–13 K.

<sup>8</sup> *San. Tu.* 1.5, 10.32–34 Ko. = VI.19.9–13 K.

<sup>9</sup> Unlike, for instance, in *On Crises*, *Critical Days* or his *Commentaries on Hippocrates's 'Prognostic'*.

the ideal kind of medicine to combat public disorder is the one professed and exercised by himself. In this work, Galenic medicine, I argue, becomes a sanctioned form of politics and is intended to be a moralising means towards the reintroduction of social harmony in Antonine Rome.

### The flatterer-physician

*Recognising the Best Physician* was initially delivered as a lecture in front of Galen's students and followers. Its extempore performance seems to have been instigated by Galen's dissatisfaction with the situation in Rome, which he portrays by means of his favourite antithesis between an idealised past and a debased present. His nostalgia, symptomatic of Second Sophistic literature, arises in this instance from the low esteem in which medicine was then held, and from the paradox that patients did not bother to distinguish between good and bad physicians, despite regarding bodily health as the most desirable of external blessings (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 47.11-12 l.). Although the prefatory section of the treatise suggests that the work's target audience are upper-class Roman patients,<sup>10</sup> further on in the text Galen admits in programmatic fashion that his book proposes to expose the defective therapy offered by crooked physicians (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 53.19-21 l.). It is thus reasonable to argue that patients might simply be a pretext audience for a work that is also meant to engage in polemic with the author's enemies. In fact, as we shall see, Galen's vitriolic rhetoric, which is part and parcel of his social commentary, makes most sense when seen as a weapon to be used against his peers. Another piece of evidence that the audience of the work has been deliberately blurred or merged is that in his narrative Galen intertwines both lay and scientific criteria for distinguishing the skilful physician. The first category includes largely moral traits that would have been easily identified by non-medical experts, e.g. aversion to luxury or flattery, whereas the second group lists qualifications specific to medical professionals, such as an aptitude for clinical diagnosis and prognosis, a full grasp of the demonstrative method and a profound knowledge of ancient medical authorities.

From an early point Galen, in negotiating social attitudes to medicine, presents the wrong choice of a physician on the patient's part as a miscalculation

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Nutton (1990: 244): 'This tract is either intended for those with a milder or a more chronic condition or, what is more likely, for those who wished to engage a physician in the future [...] or to secure his aid by means of a retainer.' Cf. Nutton's recent views on the tract's audience comprising mainly 'medical amateurs' in Nutton (2020: 98).

influenced by the perverted nature of their environment. Some physicians are chosen on the basis of their personal associations with patients, their socially respectable clientele or their economic standing, yet others on the recommendation of servants and members of their retinue, but never, as Galen protests, after practical testing of their skill or examination of their medical background (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 43.10-45.4 I.).

The ignorance which Galen ascribes to his contemporaries renders them easy prey to wicked doctors, who despise medical instruction, since they can safeguard their station by manipulating their patrons instead. Galen's description of the physicians of his time shows them as flatterers, who are devoted to 'the hunting of beasts' and liable to change in accordance with whatever favours they were seeking (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 45.5-16 I.). The tricks of charlatans are even tailored to the desires of their pleasure-seeking patients, whom they provide with pleasurable regimens (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 45.16-18 I.), undermining the authentic function of medicine that as a rule treats through unpleasant or painful means.

The issue of flattery, which, as we have seen in the [previous Chapter](#), had already become a conventional topic for essay-writing before Galen's period, is treated extensively by Plutarch in his work devoted to this topic, namely *On Friends and Flatterers*. Here Plutarch, in stressing the flatterer's dissimulation, which aims at pleasing his victim (*De Adul. et Amic.* 51B-D), contrasts him to the doctor who preserves health in fairness and truth rather than through deception and fictional delights (*De Adul. et Amic.* 61D-E). Plutarch also argues that the flatterer's alleged assistance, in stark contrast to the doctor's sincere mediation, is always prompted by arrogance and self-interest (*De Adul. et Amic.* 63D), in the same way that in Galen the flatterer-physician's goal is to gain personal power and prestige (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 45.21-47.9 I.).

The stereotypical type of the flatterer, however, can be traced as far back as Plato's *Gorgias*, where his public performance is inextricably linked to civic affairs, and his area of action is none other than statesmanship. In the last section of the dialogue, Socrates proceeds to a classification of what he calls crafts (τέχναι) and 'knacks' (ἐμπειρίαι). Crafts, based on accurate knowledge of a subject, benefit the soul or body. One example is medicine which cares for the body, and its counterpart politics that cares for the soul. Knacks, on the other hand, produce pleasure, are based on mere imitation of crafts and are therefore forms of flattery. The knack that imitates medicine is pastry-baking, while the knack imitating justice (part of politics) is rhetoric (*Gorg.* 464b-465e), as can be seen from the following table drawn up by Moss:<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Moss (2007: 231).

Table 1: *Crafts and knacks for the body and the soul*

	Body		Soul	
<b>Beneficial craft</b>	Medicine	Gymnastics	Justice (part of politics)	Legislation (part of politics)
<b>Flattering knack</b>	Pastry-baking	Cosmetics	Rhetoric	Sophistry

The analogy involving the doctor and the politician as representatives of genuine crafts contrasted to the orator-flatterer is further elaborated later in the dialogue, when Socrates becomes irritated by his interlocutor Callicles, and especially by his absurdity in asking him to act as flatterer:

SOCRATES: Then please specify to which of these two ministrations to the state you are inviting me: that of struggling hard with the Athenians to make them as good as possible, like a doctor, or that of seeking to serve their wants and humour them at every turn? . . .

CALLICLES: I say then, the way of seeking to serve them.

SOCRATES: So it is to a flatterer's work, most noble sir, that you invite me.

*Gorgias*, 521a-b; transl. mine<sup>12</sup>

The Platonic background sketched above was well known in Galen's times<sup>13</sup> and surely could not have escaped an erudite mind such as his, given his ample familiarity with the Platonic corpus. Galen, nonetheless, seems to be revising the Platonic schema by dissociating Plato's doctor from the model of the upright politician, as in the passage above, and coupling it with the negative example of the flatterer-orator, so as to make it fit his own view of contemporary doctors as sordid flatterers. Apart from reflecting his imaginative spirit on a discursive level, this change of emphasis must also have had a practical dimension, since it resulted from Galen's

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Gorg.* 527c: 'and that every kind of flattery, with regard either to oneself or to others, to few or to many, must be avoided; and that rhetoric is to be used for this one purpose always, of pointing to what is just, and so in every other activity' (καὶ πᾶσαν κολακείαν καὶ τὴν περὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὴν περὶ τοὺς ἄλλους, καὶ περὶ ὀλίγους καὶ περὶ πολλοὺς, φευκτέον· καὶ τῆ ρητορικῆ οὕτω χρηστέον ἐπὶ τὸ δίκαιον αἰεὶ, καὶ τῆ ἄλλῃ πάσῃ πράξει). In *Phaedrus* 270b-273a oratory is presented as a defective art, which combats truth and misleads the soul.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. also Maximus of Tyre's relevant discussion in *Oration* 14 or Aelius Aristides's indignant rebuttal of Plato's attack on oratory in his *Oration* 2, where the notion of flattery from the *Gorgias* is also central.

dissatisfaction with what he considers a peculiarity of Roman society in his day: due to overpopulation, which has led to individual seclusion (not even one's neighbours will notice when one is dead, *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 47.6-8 I.), physicians could easily escape punishment if their patients passed away because of poor treatment. This highlights a serious issue in the medical culture in Rome at the time, since choosing a scammer rather than a qualified physician could have proved fatal. It must have been relatively easy to run such a risk, given that medical practice was not officially controlled and the therapeutic options available to a patient were literally innumerable. Galen's rage at the bad faith of celebrated doctors in Rome is deeply rooted in his *Prognosis* as well, especially in his interesting exchange with the philosopher Eudemus, as we shall see in more detail in the [next Chapter](#). In the mode of a moral preacher, Eudemus explains to Galen that the conditions in Rome incite the wickedness that is widespread in the metropolis (unlike in the innocent countryside or the Roman provinces) and he first presents physicians as criminals, who despite committing the severest offences always escaped detection, and then, as bandits (ληστές) who ravaged the city, conspired against it, and ultimately threatened social justice (*Praen.* 4, 90.10-92.20 N. = XIV.621.2-623.14 K.). Galen's assessment of physicians in Rome is consonant with Plato's categorisation of orators and sophists as flattering detractors of justice and legislation (the two arms of politics). On the other hand, the overpopulation that Galen stresses in both accounts as having engendered the malfunction in the Roman state and more especially the moral anomaly in medical circles is reminiscent of Aristotle's *Politics* (VII, 4: 1326b2-25), where overcrowded cities are equated with ungovernable ones. The rich philosophical backdrop of Galen's text up to this point paves the way for a more dynamic dialogue with the philosophical tradition of the classical past concerning the social function of medicine. I will now attempt to show that the Platonic metaphors are not *ad hoc* literary devices contributing to the embellishment or elucidation of his narrative, but authoritative means in seemingly technical passages on medical theory and practice that help Galen articulate his concept of an ethically elevated medicine as the counterpart of politics.

### The skilled helmsman-physician

Galen's engagement with Platonic imagery pertaining to politics continues on another level, when he dwells on the extent to which the physicians of his period underestimated Hippocrates, especially as regards the

prognostication of clinical cases. In order to exemplify how vital it is for the good physician to be able to foretell future eventualities, Galen compares him with the good helmsman, who, on the basis of indicative signs, can predict violent disturbances in the sea long before they occur (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 2, 49.4-17 I.). The helmsman image was already established as a model of guidance and leadership in Presocratic philosophy,<sup>14</sup> yet the way it is used by Galen looks back specifically to the *Republic*, where steersmanship is considered a craft (*Resp.* I.341d2-3, II.360e7-8, VI.488b4-5, VI.488d4-7). Galen seems well aware of that, in view of his own exegetical remark in his *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* that the first book of the *Republic* offers many instances of the analogy between the physician and the helmsman as skilled practitioners of two beneficial arts (*PHP* 9.5, 564.10-12 DL = V.750.10-13 K.).<sup>15</sup> In this passage from *PHP*, Galen goes a step further in classifying physicians according to their objectives ('lover of mankind', φιλόανθρωπος, 'lover of honour', φιλότιμος, 'lover of fame', φιλόδοξος, 'money-maker', χρηματιστής),<sup>16</sup> only to conclude that medicine should not be driven by desire for fame or profit, hence endorsing only the first two classes of doctors. Again the idea of social benevolence that Galen praises in the case of medicine through the image of the helmsman relates to Plato's political philosophy, in which the helmsman is a symbol of the philosopher-statesman and the proper steering of his ship a representation of a well-ordered polis (*Republic* VI.489a4-6, 489c4-7).<sup>17</sup> By making this simile a central one in his treatise and going on to provide a number of case histories in which, unlike rival physicians, he alone is able to prognosticate in the mode of a good helmsman, Galen is trying to present himself in the light of an ideal physician entrusted with a humanistic vocation, promoting order in the social and moral arena.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On the image of the helmsman, see Brock (2013: 53-67).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Galen, *Med. Exp.* 9.2, 18.4-8 Walzer. The doctor is likened to the captain of a ship in certain Hippocratic treatises, such as *On Ancient Medicine* 9, 128.17-129.13 Jouanna = I.590.4-17 L.

<sup>16</sup> 'It is obvious then that the physician too, as physician, looks to the health of the body, but to the extent that he practices medicine for some other reason, he will receive the corresponding name. Some practice the medical art for monetary gain, some because of exemptions granted them by the laws, some from love of their fellow men, others again for the fame and honour that attend the profession. Accordingly, as artisans of health they will all share the name physicians, but insofar as they act with different ends in view, one will be called a lover of mankind (φιλόανθρωπος), another a lover of honour (φιλότιμος), another of fame (φιλόδοξος), still another a money-maker (χρηματιστής). The goal of the physician qua physician is not fame or profit [...]', *PHP* 9.5, 564.19-26 DL = V.751.3-13 K.; transl. De Lacy.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Plato, *Politicus* 297c-299c, *Laws* 4, 709b-c; 12, 961e-963b. More in Keyt (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Galen, *Hipp. Progn.* 1.3, 199.5-9 Heeg = XVIII B.5.1-6 K. Galen envisions the helmsman as a responsible leader, faithful to his duty, also in *Protr.* 2, 86.5-8 B. = I.3.14-17 K.; *Protr.* 8, 97.7-8 B. = I.16.15-16 K.; *QAM* 10, 73.10-11 Ba. = IV.812.1-3 K.

Galen's Platonising self-advertisement becomes his main strategy in exposing the debasement of his colleagues. As the majority of physicians covered their theoretical ignorance under a pretence of empiricism, they ridiculed the proponents of prognosis, started contentious debates with them and conspired against them until they provoked some shocking political response, as evinced in the banishment from Rome of the Hippocratic celebrity doctor Quintus (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 53.8-19 I.).<sup>19</sup> The activity of malicious physicians, who, according to Galen's description, operated as an organised group in order to annihilate their rivals, has political connotations that correspond to notions of power. Although they are not the appropriate persons to take political decisions of this sort, they nevertheless do so, led on by audacity and wickedness, just as in the *Gorgias* Socrates and Polus are surprised<sup>20</sup> by the influence of orators who are depicted as having the same 'privileges' as tyrants: they can kill, confiscate the possessions of and banish indiscriminately any citizen they choose (*Gorg.* 466b-e).

The political colouring of medical therapy features most prominently in Galen's account of correct and incorrect prescription, which – on the basis of how it is described within the text – can reasonably be imagined as a lively interaction between physician and patient: the former orders the latter to accept his dietetic prescription or, if the patient resists, prevents him from following alternative eating regimes inimical to his health (both techniques are practised by Galen, *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 55.22-23 I., *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 55.26 I., *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 57.2-8 I.). The physician's success in restoring health depends on the extent to which the patient will obey his instructions (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 55.5-6 I.), which in turn can result in public esteem for the physician or conversely social disgrace (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 55.5-14 I.). Apart from echoing the coercive aspects of public speech not only in Athenian but also in Roman Imperial politics, the impact of a physician's persuasive abilities on the medical encounter also evokes the ambiguous qualities of rhetoric as discussed in the *Gorgias*. There Gorgias claims that the orator is endowed with the ability to convince both judges and the body politic in every public assembly<sup>21</sup> and thus is superior to doctors and other specialised craftsmen even in areas outside his expertise.<sup>22</sup> For that reason Gorgias maintains that the orator has the power to 'enslave' the doctor (δοῦλον μὲν ἕξεις τὸν ἰατρόν,

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 29.11. See also Chapter 8.

<sup>20</sup> Polus revels in this thought, while Socrates is appalled by it. <sup>21</sup> Cf. also Plato, *Phaedrus* 260c-e.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the Hippocratic *On the Nature of Man* 1, 164.3-166.11 Jouanna = VI.32.1-34.7 L.

*Gorg.* 452e), providing the example of how he, as an orator, was able to persuade the patients of his brother, the physician Herodicus, to accept certain drugs in instances where the latter was simply unable to do so (*Gorg.* 456b-457c). Gorgias's rhetoric endows him with immeasurable (political) authority. However, the way in which Socrates argues against Gorgias's position is very similar to Galen's refutation of his wicked colleagues, for both men complain that unskilled individuals, whether orators or bad physicians, prevail not due to genuine knowledge but on account of fakery and tricks that help them persuade their audiences (*Gorg.* 457c-458b). Galen returns to those same Socratic notions at a later point in his treatise and develops the Platonic notion of 'slavery', mentioned above, by introducing his own concept of the servility of medical impostors:

Others who practice this art falsely will be found to be greatly esteemed among the households of wealthy men. In view of their inability to ensure anything valid (in therapy), they never request their patients to obey and follow their lead. Instead, they debase themselves to the status of the **slaves of their patients**. They obey and assist their patients in fulfilling their desires; their intention has never been to direct them towards what is most agreeable and useful because they are ignorant of any such knowledge. They satisfy the desires of their patients in the most pleasurable things, according to whatever the individual case may be, thus reaching **the utmost depth of servility**. In doing so they become **wicked slaves** whose services are useless, and indeed harmful. *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 5, 77.20-79.4 I.; transl. Iskandar

Galen's polemic against his enemies on the issue of servility informs his self-characterisation to a large extent, stressing as it does his own credentials that his enemies so sadly lack. Galen alone is in a position to treat his patients appropriately by applying his infallible medical prowess, not tricks; should the patient obey, his health is always restored, but those who disobey suffer severely (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 55.25-57.16 I.). That Galen exalts his medical practice through moral means is especially evident in the ethical evaluation to which he then subjects it, claiming that good men possess medical skill in contrast to bad men who do not (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 57.16-18 I.). This statement – however crude it may appear to modern eyes – is very close to the spirit of the *Gorgias*, in a passage where Socrates refuses to accept that the non-skilled man knows what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, fair or unfair (*Gorg.* 459d).

The exceptionality with which Galen furnishes his medical profile is a motif developed further in the narrative. A sequence of delightful case



histories are elaborated, all of which explain why those witnessing Galen's medical achievements called him a 'wonder-worker' and 'wonder-teller' (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3-4, 59.18-63.14 I.). What the stories themselves put across very strongly is Galen's pride in his prognosticating skill by contrast to the shamelessness of inexperienced charlatans (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 4, 63.21-67.10 I.), which backs up his initial conceit that no one ever gave such precise prescriptions as he did, and that he alone, due to secure knowledge, has never once erred in his lifetime (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 59.12-16 I.).<sup>23</sup>

This might cast some additional light on the sophisticated way in which the helmsman imagery is deployed in Galen's text. Plato uses the simile of the helmsman to illustrate the epistemological status of crafts, considering the helmsman an expert, who just like the doctor, has the critical ability to distinguish between possibilities and impossibilities (τὰ δυνατόν vs. τὰ ἀδύνατον) in his art (*Republic* 360e-361a). Taking into account that medical prognosis is based on possibility just as diagnosis is,<sup>24</sup> Galen is in all likelihood resorting to the helmsman analogy to furnish his medical expertise with the tenets of Platonic epistemology, thus shielding it in philosophical prestige. This proposition also explains why, in attacking the Methodists for their lack of any solid knowledge in the *Therapeutic Method*, Galen effectively compares them to negligent pilots who wreck the ship and then hand over the planking for the passengers to cling to (*MM* 5.15, X.377.17-378.2 K.). In the context of *Recognising the Best Physician*, the epistemological underpinnings of the helmsman imagery make sense, especially in the light of the key role that scientific knowledge acquires in the ensuing narrative, and in particular of Galen's rejection of rhetorical speeches, which (taking his cue from Plato) he considers an enemy to truth, in contrast to the Stoic view in which rhetoric is part of logic, for example.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from affirming his medical expertise, Galen's self-image is also designed to challenge the perverted version of medicine practised by his peers. To that end, his self-image is likened to that of Socrates, particularly his self-assertiveness in operating as a performer of authentic politics within his city in his opposition to non-experts:

SOCRATES: I think I am one of the few, not to say the only one, in Athens who attempts the true art of statesmanship, and the only man of the present time who manages affairs of state:

<sup>23</sup> On Galen's attitude towards charlatans, see Boudon-Millot (2003).

<sup>24</sup> For instance, Hipp. *De Morb.* 1.6, VI.150-152 L.; Herophilus T. 51 von Staden (=Stob. *Ecl.* 4.38.9).

<sup>25</sup> Percy (1983).

hence, as the speeches that I make from time to time are not aimed at gratification, but at what is best instead of what is most pleasant, and as I do not care to deal in ‘these pretty toys’ that you recommend, I shall have not a word to say at the bar. The same case that I made out to Polus will apply to me; for I shall be like a doctor tried by a bench of children on a charge brought by a cook.

*Gorgias*, 521d-e

To have a cook, typically offering pleasure in the belly, bring a legal charge against a doctor, who serves the community by devoting himself to its health, is to demolish any sense of social and indeed ethical order. What is more, to have children, who are both rationally unsound and pleasure-prone, determine the outcome of this legal case, is to fight a losing battle. This philosophical baggage implicated in the simile of the doctor and the cook is made part of Galen’s *Prognosis (Praen. 1, 74.8-11 N. = XIV.605.8-12 K.)* too, where it becomes a staple of the author’s self-advertisement in promoting the utility of medicine as opposed to perversely using it to seek to please.

The passage quoted from *Gorgias* also highlights the connection between the good doctor and the upright politician that is so well suited to Galen’s understanding of true medicine. We see from this passage that, as the best possible statesman, Socrates is aiming at what is best (πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον), just as in *Gorgias* 521a-b cited above he was referring to ministering to the city (τὴν θεραπείαν τῆς πόλεως) by struggling to make his fellow citizens as good as possible (ὅπως ὡς βέλτιστοι ἔσονται) in the manner of a good doctor. The moral impact of the real politician or physician is what seems to have inspired Galen so much that he adjusts it to his self-projection as an ideal physician, who brings about stability on a political and ethical level.

### **Genuine medical art in the service of society**

What qualifies someone as a true physician therefore is their skill, which – according to Galen – should be manifested through demonstrative arguments and by using deduction and analogy.<sup>26</sup> Galen proceeds to specify that logical abilities should not just be employed by medically inclined men, but also by rich dignitaries and men of power, who must all be able

<sup>26</sup> *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 5, 69.20-70.6 I.; *Part. Art. Med.* 6.6, 42.2-3 Lyons; *PHP* 2.5, 140.21-22 DL = V.254.11-13 K.

to differentiate between correct demonstration and false doctrines. To be in a position to recognise the good physician then is not presented as a private matter, but as an act of social discernment with broader repercussions, similar, for example, to the application of Aristotelian *prohairesis* (reasoned judgment), informing not merely personal choices but above all political resolutions. This is also apparent from two related changes of emphasis in Galen's narrative. First, by the generalised grammatical subject in the following critique by Galen, which describes lack of acumen, lack of knowledge and lack of confidence as all-pervading conditions, relevant to everyone in Galen's society:

To become acquainted with the tricks of impostors among physicians is an easy task in itself; nevertheless, it has become difficult to do so because **nobody** is willing to discriminate, to conduct examinations, and to acquire knowledge. I cannot see why **anyone who** definitely seeks to recognize skillful physicians, . . . should ever fail to examine them and put them to the test; **they** lack confidence in themselves, and do not think that they are competent for this (task). *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 7, 93.7-14 I.

The wider importance of choosing the best physician is also shown by the next narrative, which deals with the failure of scientific method specifically within a civic context. Here Galen asserts that men of action who 'run their lives like beasts' cannot possibly test physicians, because, as he says, they are unskilled and ignorant of the methods of debating, while they also lack self-confidence (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 7, 93.13-18 I.). To make his case, Galen adduces a passage from his favourite historian Thucydides, which considers the employment of dialectical arguments<sup>27</sup> and reasoning a *sine qua non* for political interaction (Thucydides 3.42.2: 'When a man insists that words ought not to be our guides in action, he is either wanting in sense or wanting in honesty').<sup>28</sup> Galen's version reads as follows: 'He who

<sup>27</sup> For clarity's sake, it should be noted that Galen approves of dialectical arguments, which he opposes to rhetorical or sophistical ones. In categorising premises in *PHP*, he sets up four types: scientific and demonstrative premises pertaining to the essence of things, dialectical premises concerned with training, rhetorical premises related to persuasion and the use of witnesses, and sophistical premises linked to the fraudulent use of figures of speech, *PHP* 2.8, 156.27-158.2 DL = V.273.1-12 K., *PHP* 3.1, 168.14-20 DL = V.286.6-13 K. He approves of the first two, but rejects the other two.

<sup>28</sup> I quote the whole chapter to stress the common ground between Thucydides's political account and Galen's own. The underlined section is what Galen quotes from Diodotus's speech: 'I am far from blaming those who invite us to reconsider our sentence upon the Mytilenaeans, nor do I approve of the censure which has been cast on the practice of deliberating more than once about matters so critical. In my opinion the two things most adverse to good counsel are haste and passion; the former is generally a mark of folly, the latter of vulgarity and narrowness of mind. When a man insists that words ought not to be our guides in action, he is either wanting in sense or wanting in honesty: he is wanting in sense if he does not see that there is no other way in which we can throw

rejects words and reasoning, claiming that things cannot be authenticated by them, is either wanting in intellect or, with this (claim), he seeks to acquire authority or has an interest at stake' (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 95.6-9 I.). The quotation from Thucydides comes from Diodotus's speech to Cleon in the Mytilene debate; although itself very brief, the surrounding context, which Galen knew as he was very familiar with the Thucydidean description of the Peloponnesian War,<sup>29</sup> introduces topics we encounter in Galen's account too, such as rivalry, personal interest as opposed to the common good, prediction of future events based on reason, civic malfunction and flattery employed to win popular favour.<sup>30</sup>

Medicine and politics are explicitly interwoven in the next case history, which focuses on a young patient suffering from various attacks of fever. This case history marks a turning point in the text, in that it is an elaborated auto-narration accompanied by extensive social commentary. In fact, this is the first case history we come across that is neither hypothetical (Galen conjectures how a clinical case might progress given different diagnoses and treatments, e.g. *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 53.22-55.6 I.) nor strictly technical (encompassing the sequence: diagnosis, prognosis, therapy and result of the treatment, e.g. *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 3, 55.25-57.18 I., *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 4, 61.17-63.14 I., *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 6, 79.22-85.5 I.). It is also the first case history that fleshes out the social credentials of Galen's fellow physician involved in the story (a wealthy youth), his intellectual stance (he hates dialectical arguments) and his conflicting response to Galen's diagnosis (he laughs at and ridicules him, *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 95.12-13 I.). Another important topic in this case history is the young physician's medical ignorance, which is progressively linked to his belonging to a circle of flatterers (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 97.5 I.). Galen's response to the group of flatterers-physicians is a philosophical one, for the

light on the unknown future; and he is not honest if, seeking to carry a discreditable measure, and knowing that he cannot speak well in a bad cause, he reflects that he can slander well and terrify his opponents and his audience by the audacity of his calumnies . . . And so the city suffers; for she is robbed of her counsellors by fear. Happy would she be if such citizens could not speak at all, for then the people would not be misled. The good citizen should prove his superiority as a speaker, not by trying to intimidate those who are to follow him in debate, but by fair argument; . . . Then he who succeeds will not say pleasant things contrary to his better judgment in order to gain a still higher place in popular favour, and he who fails will not be striving to attract the multitude to himself by like compliances' (transl. by Jowett). Galen uses the same Thucydidean passage in slightly different versions to show the value of reason, *PHP* 5.7, 358.8-9 DL = V.503.2-4 K; *UP* 3.10, 159.18 Helmreich = III.217.18-19 K.

<sup>29</sup> On Galen's acquaintance with Thucydides, see Nutton (2009a: 25-26), Nutton (2020: 11). Galen must have meant to compare the destruction caused by the Peloponnesian War with Commodus's regime.

<sup>30</sup> On medical language and medical metaphor in Thucydides, see Jouanna (2012).

flatterers' continuing laughter notwithstanding, Galen, in the mode of a self-disciplined man, replies mildly to expose their lack of education and their intellectual incompetence (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 97.6-20 I.).<sup>31</sup> The scene is infused with dramatic effect, as Galen describes the delirious reactions of his rivals, while Socratic nuances can be detected behind Galen's remarks that everybody unjustly hated him and attempted to do him harm (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 99.4-8 I.).

Galen's medical authority is hence philosophically tinged and leads him to his penetrating criticism of contemporary society, which he portrays in a markedly moral light. Spurred on by the need to choose suitable physicians, Galen levels an attack against the vices of Roman society, notably luxury, boredom, self-indulgence, the pursuit of wealth, prestige and offices, and neglect of legal duties:

If anybody wishes to examine physicians and put them to the test, this matter will be beyond his reach if pursued without any prior knowledge of medical principles and without the self-discipline to endure lengthy dialectical arguments. None of those who live a life of ease can endure this because each is dominated by luxury and boredom. They are always busy seeking pleasure; from this they do not regain consciousness. This adversity which has befallen the slaves of pleasure who are in this condition is not slight. Some of them are preoccupied with the pursuit of riches and prestige, and seek (promotion to) the first place or to the second or third or other high offices. Many of them, I think, are in pitiful situations. They spend their lives in making rhetorical speeches that are irrelevant to good judgment and the legal duties which they practise; some they deliver before passing sentences, others after, and so forth and so on. If those who take up legal duties and hold high offices were to get genuine education they would be able to omit all this stuff and to adopt shorter routes to the practice of legal duties, and to employ the rest of their lives in doing better things. *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 99.10-101.3 I.

Perhaps the most noteworthy point in this extract is the author's attack on high officials, who have resorted to immoral ways of life owing to a lack of culture that has destroyed their self-discipline and good judgment (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 99.21-101.3 I.). Education, Galen proposes, will make politicians more ethical. Although it is debatable to what degree such public controversy corresponds to contemporary reality, as Nutton warns with reference to Lucian's satirical commentaries (especially the preface to

<sup>31</sup> 'He then laughed, and all the flatterers who were around him joined in the laughter, which lasted for a long time; I waited until their laughter was over, and said to them, "I am prepared to excuse you, for I am aware that you cannot (possibly) know of combinations of two tertian fevers because you do not devote time to caring about such important things. You are not so keen on education as to consult books written by physicians on combinations of fevers ...'

*Nigrinus* and *The Dependent Scholar*),<sup>32</sup> in Galen's case we must be somewhat closer than in Lucian's satires to the true picture, since only a pragmatic framework would have couched Galen's next observation, if it were to have any actual appeal to readers:

In my opinion, the recovery of a leading citizen from a disease is more rewarding and much better for him than pursuing legal duties and passing judgments between opponents who quarrel all day long over money. *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 101.3-7 I.

As is obvious in both the previous extract and this one, Galen pinpoints a major issue for public men: time constraints.<sup>33</sup> He therefore offers them the practical tip of redefining their priorities. He suggests that they minimise their time-consuming duties in relation to menial matters and, after appreciating the value of bodily health, focus their energies on tracking down the most suitable healer for future use. By implication, searching out the best physician is one of those 'better things' that Galen advises his powerful readers (current or would-be statesmen) too to engage in, as a way of driving them from wasting precious time and useless commitment to the lowly duties described in the text.<sup>34</sup> Self-determination and a discriminating mind are what is needed to get them going, and these are framed by Galen as skills they could cultivate for themselves.<sup>35</sup> Hence at the end of the day, it is not as important for them to find the best physician as to actually get involved in the process of research, which, in line with what Galen has already said, will be intellectually rewarding and help hone their critical skills.

Galen is offering his own input as to how concerning oneself with one's body may lead to readdressing one's mental and moral priorities (cf. the discussion in [Chapter 2](#)).<sup>36</sup> Thus, Galen believes that the kind of medicine he is propagating can help combat both lack of education and any

<sup>32</sup> Nutton (1988: 59).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Bon. Mal. Suc.* 13.7, 112 Ieraci Bio = VI.813.9-13 K., where Galen groups political men responsible for the administration of nations and cities together with their servants and those on military campaigns, since they are all devoted to business, unlike those who have ample leisure time (*eleutheroi*).

<sup>34</sup> The same concerns feature in *Matters of Health*, where political men are said to be distracted by political ambition from properly caring for their bodies.

<sup>35</sup> 'You now know that it is not difficult to apply tests to the practice of this art, if you are resolved to do so. If you are too proud to examine physicians, because you are a wealthy man or a hero, you will be the first to be punished. Unlike the fact that it is up to you whether you accept or reject the (idea of) examining physicians and studying medicine, it is not up to you when it comes to needing medicine', *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 109.20-24 I.

<sup>36</sup> This is a constant concern of Galen; just like in *Character Traits*, for example, the usefulness of medicine as the art of preserving bodily health is given prominence as a deterrent to bodily desires and thus acts as a proposed form of self-control; see Joseph Ibn 'Aqni, *The Hygiene of the Soul* 79-80 Zonta.

associated social disaster. It may therefore be seen as a condoned form of politics, a response to the failed variety that existed in his time. Far from being an unrealistic theoretical model of statesmanship, the type of politics Galen is proposing has practical usefulness in his society, as noted above, although it would be fair to say that his prescriptions in this area do not amount to any kind of positive model for how a good civic community, state or empire should be run (in the mode, for instance, of Dio of Prusa and Plutarch). It is interesting that, even though Galen seems to be doing real moral philosophy in his body of ethical texts, in *Recognising the Best Physician* or indeed elsewhere he cannot be said to be doing political philosophy in any real sense. Rather, he is seeing everything from the viewpoint of a disgruntled doctor, who is convinced that as long as everyone gets things right as far as medicine and making correct judgments about health and medical practitioners goes, everything else will fall into place, including the correction of public disorder.

That Galen links ethics and politics and accentuates their practical utility in contrast to theoretical philosophy aligns him with similar ideas held in ancient thought (notably in Plato and Aristotle). He confidently declares these connections in other parts of his corpus too. For example, taking his cue from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Socrates's views as described in that work, he mingles ethical and political virtues and actions (τὰς ἠθικὰς τε καὶ πολιτικὰς ὀνομαζομένας ἀρετὰς τε καὶ πράξεις, *PHP* 9.7, 588.26-29 DL = V.781.6-10 K.). In *My Own Doctrines* he considers practical, political (πρακτικὴν τε καὶ πολιτικὴν) and ethical philosophy versions of the same philosophical branch in contrast to the theoretical (*Prop. Plac.* 15, 138.24-26 PX); just like in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, he explains that morals and political action taken together (ἠθὸς τε καὶ τὰς πολιτικὰς πράξεις) are a subject that speculative philosophers will never tackle (*PHP* 9.7, 588.7-9 DL = V.779.16-780.2 K.).

### Autobiography and Galen's philosophical medicine

In another section of the text, Galen launches a lengthy narration of some key points in his own career, slanted so as to draw attention to the values and virtues that have helped him succeed, and which are thus being held up as good models for others to follow. Thus, he is introducing his idea of moral medicine here that differs so much from the tendencies of his rivals. The latter, due to want of medical skill, behave as self-interested public men, whereas Galen had repudiated worldly pleasure well before embarking upon the practice of the medical art. He explains how, even as a youth he distinguished the profession of medicine from the social and political

drudgeries that might accompany it, such as competing for clients, what he calls the ‘burden of going at an early hour to wait at the doorsteps of men, of riding out with them, of waiting for them at the thresholds of kings, accompanying them to their homes, and drinking with them’ (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 101.21–103.2 I.). He therefore scorned the Roman custom of *salutatio* that satirists, for instance Juvenal (*Sat.* 1.127–146) or Lucian (*Nigr.* 22, *Merc. cond.* 30–31) so often debunk.<sup>37</sup> Galen also attacks salutation in his *Prognosis* (*Praen.* 1, 68.2–11 N. = XIV.599.3–600.5 K.) and *Therapeutic Method* (*MM* 1.9, X.76.15–18 K.), regarding it as a severe impediment to both medical education and the emotional equilibrium of the physician, as it is liable to cause him distress (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 103.2 I.).<sup>38</sup>

In order to call further attention to the worldly distractions that could deprive other physicians of their medical skill, he compares them to the orator Herodes, who retained his popularity despite frequently delivering unsuccessful speeches owing to his busy schedule (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 113.15–115.6 I.). This parallelism of doctor *qua* orator leads Galen to refer to the existence of the same paradox in medicine, where again the most highly esteemed physicians seemed to be the less well educated and the busiest ones (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 115.3–6 I.). Class fraction may be what Galen is aiming at here, as he sets up a strong divide between himself as an ideal physician, and less accomplished medics and political men or sophists.

It is precisely in the light of his disavowal of the worldly distractions indulged in by other doctors and his own self-righteousness that Galen proceeds to explain why in ca. 157 AD he was chosen to be a physician to the gladiators at Pergamum in preference to older and more experienced colleagues.<sup>39</sup> By his own account, the high priest at the gladiatorial school chose Galen for the post because, unlike the others, he was not engaged in useless and time-consuming activities (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 103.16–105.1 I.), reminding us of the time-wasting engagements of the high officials and bad physicians he has attacked earlier in the work. The high priest praised Galen for his other moral virtues too: his tireless devotion to useful endeavours and the way he abjured idleness. Galen distances himself from

<sup>37</sup> On salutation, see Schlange-Schöningh (2003: 58, 149, 152, 293). See also n. 26, Chapter 8.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the repetition of the same ideas a bit further down (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 105.20–107.2 I.; also in *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 111.19–22 I.; *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 113.8–15 I.; *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 115.14–23 I.; *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 13, 129.17–22 I.), which indicates Galen’s anxiety to persuade his readers of the truth of his statements and of his exceptional status in relation to his rivals.

<sup>39</sup> Nutton (2020: 22–23).



both failed politicians and failed physicians. In his efforts to render devotion to the study of medicine attractive to his audience, he claims that it befits heroes and rich men, and segues into castigating those who are ignorant of the structure of body and soul, but deeply well versed in financial matters regarding their household (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 111.5-14 I.). Galen elevates knowledge of bodily anatomy to the same status as knowledge of the human soul, which hints at the close interdependence he sees between soul and body in his medical and philosophical discourse, which, in turn, is in line with his preface to *Recognising the Best Physician* (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 41.5-9 I.). This connection also explains his emphasis on philosophical medicine.

Moreover, this conclusion is further supported by the fact that in closing his essay, Galen argues that he had composed the work in order to respond to those contemporaries who had questioned the interdependence between philosophy and medicine. As already noted, Galen was very proud of the fact that philosophy formed the foundation of medical education, and he takes it to be the defining prerequisite for a complete physician too. Here he juxtaposes rich men corrupted by flatterers to philosophical men who always sought the truth, with Galen's self-fashioning being hinted at in this case, because so often in his writings he casts himself as a lover of truth, as seen above. In addition to overlapping with his professional self-image, this final delineation of the ideal physician-cum-philosopher exonerates him from some of the darker aspects of his public role, notably self-praise. Although he generally condemns self-praise on the part of a physician, at other times he welcomes it, provided that the cures that have elicited this praise are significant (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 13, 131.8-11 I.), just like his own, which have been described extensively in the foregoing text.

His personal self-praise in this work, however, is also linked to the promotion of his idea of the philosophical regulation of medicine. The tract closes with the peculiar case history of the pregnant woman who miscarried. Galen's medical diagnosis was in that instance so precise that most of those present admired him, but the woman's husband remained totally unimpressed, despite having witnessed Galen's successes on other occasions in the past. Galen thus called him a 'beast' twice over (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 13, 133.9 I., *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 13, 133.12 I.) and classified him in the same general category as wealthy citizens, great conquerors of cities and nations and powerful statesmen, who were all devoid of powers of thought and prudence (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 13, 133.12-14 I.). One wonders whether Galen is here alluding to Roman politicians in particular, reflecting his opposition to Roman imperialism, and thus articulating his own form of

resistance as a Greek intellectual under Roman rule. Even if notions of ethnic identity are not clearly involved in this instance,<sup>40</sup> the way Galen elevates the status of education, acumen and discretion in the area of medicine above that of dominance in political power gives us a glimpse of his personal stance vis-à-vis the socio-cultural structures in which he was active. The philosophical lens through which he envisages the proper application of the medical art was a Greek product anyway, and his subscription to philosophical medicine is precisely what seems to validate his medical contribution rather than that of his Roman colleagues.

### Conclusion

*Recognising the Best Physician* must have been written around the same time as *Prognosis* (ca. 178 AD) and presumably with similar intent, namely, if not to strengthen, at least to preserve Galen's standing as an Imperial physician.<sup>41</sup> It is true that one of the main preoccupations of any successful physician in Rome was his social establishment within a cosmopolitan community that contained equally accomplished orators and sophists,<sup>42</sup> and Henri Willy Pleket is probably right to suggest that the intellectualisation of medicine came about as a result of such professional concerns.<sup>43</sup> Galen's case, however, is more complex than is often assumed, since his engagement with philosophy and ethics in particular has a social and moral orientation that is too dynamic and methodical to be serving only his advancement. It is a firmly entrenched ideology, a strong and honest belief that medicine can change the world not just through healed bodies but above all through reformed minds and characters. For Galen ethics was not a means to an end, but another path, combined with that of medicine, towards social harmony.

In viewing people as both psychosomatic entities and public agents, Galen's philosophical medicine, steeped in the principles of practical ethics, helps its addressees to combat the challenges of Graeco-Roman

<sup>40</sup> E.g. *PHP* 2.2, 108.14-16 DL = V.218.8-12 K., *PHP* 3.3, 186.1-3 DL = V.303.13-16 K. Other passages are more explicit on Galen's view (shared by other Greek intellectuals) that a Hellene is the recipient of Greek *paideia*, not someone who is Greek by birth or origin. See e.g. *San. Tu.* 1.10, 24.22-25 Ko. = VI.51.8-13 K.; *PHP* 3.3, 190.4-7 DL = V.307.18-308.3 K. See also the case of the Scythian Anacharsis in the *Exhortation* in [Chapter 5](#).

<sup>41</sup> Nutton (1990: 243) and Nutton (1979: 49). Nutton (2020: 40) now dates it to around 176-177 AD, so a couple of years before *Prognosis*.

<sup>42</sup> Nutton (1977) suggests that the majority of physicians hardly managed to rise above the middle class.

<sup>43</sup> Pleket (1995: 33).

society and thus reveals a man sensitised to his socio-cultural surroundings, and eager to contribute in a practical way to public life. The facts of his life show that Galen never entered politics. One reason might have been his aversion to the variety of civic life he experienced in reality, with all the predicaments it involved, as depicted in works such as *Recognising the Best Physician*. His political input was thus realised not through an active public career, but through his morally-driven medicine, which was empowered with the qualities needed to reform the degraded political community of his time. By the same token, while in other thinkers politics is a crucial site of moral enhancement, dealt with in independent treatises (e.g. Dio of Prusa's *Orations* 42-50, Plutarch's *Political Precepts* or *Old Men in Public Affairs*), Galen did not go down that route. But his *Recognising the Best Physician* does offer an insight into the moral components of politics, showing how the medicine that Galen personifies can assist Roman politics to attain ethical purity and function efficiently in the interests of the body politic.

Similarly, it is not fair to crudely apply the characteristics of Hippocratic medicine to Galen.<sup>44</sup> Owsei Temkin has shown that in the fifth and fourth centuries the competitive nature of Greek medicine, which (in contrast to philosophy) was a profession, led its practitioners to wear 'the philosopher's dress' in order to impress their audiences.<sup>45</sup> Although in Galen's time medicine was still a competitive occupation, it had developed greatly as a science as a result of the critical engagement with both the Hippocratic and Hellenistic medical traditions, so that its dependence on philosophy would not have been as essential as it was in Classical times. On the other hand, Galen's production of distinctly ethical works taken together with the many moral(ising) passages we encounter throughout his corpus are a strong testimony to Galen's inspired relation to moral philosophy and reflects his ideology, as I have argued above. Galen's wedding of medicine to ethical philosophy, and his self-delineation as a moralist-physician cannot just be the product of self-promotion or eccentricity. Rather it demonstrates his attempt to establish the authority of a distinctive and innovative form of medicine, which takes into account the social conditions of its recipients (whether physicians or patients) and their ethical as well as their corporeal welfare.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Nutton (1992: 48-49).

<sup>45</sup> Temkin (1953: 218 and 221; quotation from p. 221).

*Prognosis*

In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.

Quote attributed to George Orwell

*Prognosis* is a rich source of case histories, centred around Galen's successful prognostication of illness, something that enabled him to enjoy a high level of professional and social visibility. This has led critics to look at the work as a self-aggrandising piece, promoting Galen's standing in the competitive medical marketplace as well as in imperial and aristocratic circles.<sup>1</sup> Others have seen it as an example of Galenic autobiography<sup>2</sup> or prized it for what it has to say about the contemporary historical and cultural milieu, especially in relation to the social position of doctors.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, on closer reading, these aspects of the work are to a greater or lesser extent caught up with Galenic notions of morality and ethics. And, although this material is scattered throughout the text, it has not hitherto attracted the attention it is due. For example, even though the essay's generic affiliation with the moral diatribe was recognised as early as the publication of the text's most recent edition and commentary (in 1979), this merely produced some overgeneralised statements to the effect that Galen's ethical concerns were a marker of Second Sophistic high culture, and there has been no attempt at further exploration since.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Lloyd (2009: 126), Singer (2013: 9, n. 18), Singer (2014b).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Perkins (1995: 142–172) examines *Prognosis* as an autobiographical example of a medical narrative, which offers an understanding of the interior functioning of the sick body as an object of knowledge. Galen's lost work *On Slander* (περί τῆς διαβολῆς, ἐν ᾧ καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου βίου) must have been the most representative example of his biographical writing (*Lib. Prop.* 15, 170.9 Boudon-Millot = XIX.46.5–6 K.), Nutton (1972: 54).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Kollesch (1965); Nutton (1972) and Nutton (1979: 145–146); Mattern (1999: 7–18); Schlange-Schöninggen (2003); Hankinson (2008); Israelowich (2015: 61–63). Another group of authorities have explored the medical strands of Galen's diagnostic and prognostic practice, such as their relation to the Hippocratic *Epidemics*; see e.g. Cooper (2004) and Lloyd (2009).

<sup>4</sup> Nutton (1979: 59–60) paved the way for an exploration of ethics in the text, but there has been no scholarly response forthcoming. Cf. Mattern (2008a: 60) who calls the *Prognosis* an 'atypical treatise' and 'Galen's most literary work' without referring explicitly to its moralising aspects. On Galen's

This Chapter aims to delve into the moralising aspects of *Prognosis* and probe the reasons for which Galen infused this essay with elements characteristic of popular philosophy. What is the role of practical ethics in this self-laudatory piece, and what is the connection – actual, envisaged or otherwise – between medical diagnosis, cure and prognosis on the one hand and philosophical treatment of character and soul on the other? As I will go on to argue, the moral discourse throughout *Prognosis* may be seen as the forceful medium through which Galen: a) validates his medical and philosophical profile, b) proposes how to ethically regulate the medical profession within society, and, most importantly, c) expounds his moral didacticism on social passions, notably malice (*kakoëtheia*) and love of strife (*philoneikia*). Far from the inherently eristic and conceited physician he is often perceived to be, Galen depicts himself as a wise moral critic, whose edifying instructions resonate with the readers' own experience of how to conduct oneself privately and publicly in different situations and settings. Galen does not only advise readers on how to comport themselves in a dignified manner in the company of colleagues and acquaintances, but also on how to take certain virtuous paths through life.

### Generic and narrative challenges and prospects

*Prognosis* encompasses the interpenetration of several literary models, including autobiography and diatribe, as mentioned above, but also the epidemic case history, polemic and refutation and the philosophical dialogue.<sup>5</sup> The use of the dialogue form in particular is not insignificant. Apart from being the most important form of philosophical literature in this period,<sup>6</sup> its use in *Prognosis* is more extensive than in any other work by Galen.<sup>7</sup> The various conversations are reminiscent of the Platonic exchanges and provide Galen with an array of moralising opportunities, such as the use of direct speech or of philosophical silence.

The style of the treatise is also peculiar in that it mixes philosophical seriousness with humour, wit and sarcasm, as well as occasional comic highlights. Derisive laughter is deployed by a number of malefactors as a way of abusing Galen, whilst at other times Galen himself laughs at other people's erroneous actions or judgments in order to boost his educational

relation to the Second Sophistic movement, see e.g. Kollesch (1981), von Staden (1995) and von Staden (1997b), Elliott (2005), Petit (2018: 5–8); cf. Ieraci Bio (1997) and Desideri (2000).

<sup>5</sup> Nutton (1979: 60–61) mentions also the *commentarius* (memoir) and possibly the *pinax* (list of an author's works). See also Nutton (1972: 50–51), where he adds the personal anecdote as well.

<sup>6</sup> König (2008). <sup>7</sup> Nutton (1979: 61).

authority.<sup>8</sup> With the concurrent presence of a ‘laughter of ridicule’ and a ‘laughter of superiority’, stylistic heterogeneity too helps emphasise the markedly moral nature of the work.

Turning to structure, this is even less typical, as the narrative displays disarray,<sup>9</sup> including digressions that break off the chronological sequence of the story. This is further complicated by the fact that up to chapter 8, which marks the beginning of what has been considered the second part of the essay,<sup>10</sup> the text alternates between sections on medical theory and practice pertaining to prognosis, and sections on social moralising. But I will suggest that some degree of thematic cohesion is detectable, at least in the first half of the work, a suggestion substantiated by the intense emphasis on moral anxieties and priorities.

In terms of narrative texture, the exceedingly vivid accounts are due to a large extent to the fact that Galen is not just the author of the work, but also the intratextual raconteur/rapporteur of the plot (to whom I shall be referring as either the Galenic narrator or ‘Galen’) and at the same time a character/persona, who plays an active part in the narrated encounters.<sup>11</sup> Such interfusion may render it difficult for readers to distinguish between fact and fiction in what they read, but as I have shown elsewhere with reference to Plutarch’s sympotic vignettes in *Table Talk*, this is consistent with the increasing demands of Imperial-period authors for an alert type of reader, who actively contemplates through the process of reading.<sup>12</sup> This is also the case with Galen’s text, as I will show.

A final idiosyncratic feature of the work relates to its main subject. *Prognosis* is not included in Galen’s bibliographical inventories, so we cannot possibly know in which category of his production he would have ideally placed it. That said, despite the forthright claim of the title to being

<sup>8</sup> *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 8, 97.6–20 I. is a good example here, as observed in the [previous Chapter](#). See also *Lib. Prop.* 3, 144.2–15 Boudon-Millot = XIX.21.1–13 K. More references provided by Mattern (2008a: 76 with [note 18](#)). On laughter in Greek literature, see Jażdżewska (2016), (2018) and more recently Destré and Trivigno (2019). As Gleason (2009: 95) notes: ‘Laughter was no laughing matter in Galen’s world, but a key weapon in the intellectual’s armoury . . .’.

<sup>9</sup> Nutton (1979: 198): ‘From this point on, the illustrative episodes become more and more disconnected and are strung together without any attempt at integration into a well structured treatise.’

<sup>10</sup> Nutton (1979: 198–199).

<sup>11</sup> On Galen’s aptitude as a narrator of medical narratives, see Nutton (1991a: 9–25). Through examples from the *Therapeutic Method*, Nutton refers to the Galenic narrator as an ‘accomplished storyteller’. He adds: ‘He [i.e. Galen] has an eye for pleasant detail, a fund of sympathy, and a vivid imagination . . . Galen feels free to exploit all his literary and rhetorical skills to adorn a tale for the entertainment, as well as the instruction, of his readers.’ (p. 12).

<sup>12</sup> Xenophonotos (2016a: esp. 176 and 173–194).

a work devoted to prognosis, Galen does not consider it a proper treatise on the topic and refrains from grouping it together with strictly prognostic tracts, such as his four treatises on pulse,<sup>13</sup> *Critical Days* and *On Crises*.<sup>14</sup> Therefore to Galen's mind, *Prognosis* (pretty much like *Recognising the Best Physician*) is not a purely medical work, notwithstanding its technical features. The medical interactions between doctors, patients, relatives and associates of patients open up to include a parade of other figures from the highest ranks of Roman and provincial society and politics, especially philosophers, orators and members of the Imperial family, who are more or less interested in discussing moral matters or are the recipients of ethical recommendations. Hence the medical component is, I would argue, a pretext for giving philosophical advice, a framework for Galen's moralising input.

### The distortion of truth

*Prognosis* starts with Galen's complaints that the majority of doctors are incompetent in the field of prognostication, since they are completely incapable of foretelling how the illness of their patients will progress. If there is any truth in the ignorance of doctors that Galen describes as a widespread phenomenon in his day (thematized also in *Recognising the Best Physician*, as seen in Chapter 7), then it could be historically explained by Trajan's withdrawal of the earlier tax exemptions granted to doctors by Vespasian,<sup>15</sup> which obliged them to concentrate on scrabbling for money instead of educating themselves, and led to the inclusion of half-trained, often illiterate, slaves in this group of medical professionals.<sup>16</sup>

Galen communicates this widespread phenomenon with the recipient of his work, Epigenes, an otherwise shadowy figure. We cannot tell with certainty whether Epigenes was a physician himself but, if he is to be identified with the addressee of the *Exercise with the Small Ball*, he must have been either a *philiatros* or Galen's student and social peer.<sup>17</sup> At any rate, the key information that can be gathered about him from *Prognosis* is that he is a well-off, fellow Pergamene, who has benefitted from an elite education (e.g. *Praen.* 9, 120.10-12 N. = XIV.651.8-12 K.) and

<sup>13</sup> I.e. *The Different Kinds of Pulse, Diagnosis by the Pulse, Causes of Pulses, Prognosis by the Pulse*.

<sup>14</sup> *CAM* 216.11-17 Boulogne-Delattre = I.295.9-14 K.

<sup>15</sup> Nutton (1985: 29-30), Nutton (1977: 200-210); cf. Israelowich (2015: 25-30) and Samama (2003: 72-73). See *PHP* 9.5, 564.22 DL = V.751.7-8 K.

<sup>16</sup> *Opt. Med. Cogn.* 1, 41.12-43.7 I. <sup>17</sup> Nutton (1979: 147-148).

knowledgeable in medical matters. As we will see later on, the set of cultural, philosophical and medical credentials assigned to him enable Galen's readers to relate to Epigenes and adopt his ethical attitude as depicted in the story.

Now, the intriguing aspect about Galen's outburst over the physicians' inability to prognosticate is that he explains its origins in highly moral terms, particularly through the dichotomy between appearing to be (δοκεῖν) and actually being (εἶναι) that is also central to Platonic ethics:<sup>18</sup>

For since those who are eager for the semblance of ability rather than the reality have come to predominate in medicine as well as in the other arts, the finest aspects of these arts are now neglected and attention is lavished upon what may bring them a high reputation with the general public – a gratifying word or act, a bit of flattery, a toadying salutation each day of the rich and powerful men in the cities, accompanying them when they go out, staying at their side, escorting them on their homeward journey, amusing them at dinner.<sup>19</sup> *Praen.* I, 68.2-11 N. = XIV.599.3-600.5 K.<sup>20</sup>

The problem Galen identifies is that there is a social preference for appearances over reality, for the surface rather than the essence of things, and that moral agents inclined to these preferences have come to triumph in all the arts, especially medicine. The divide between appearance and truth is a pivotal one in Galen's (moral) thought world and is often employed as part of his self-delineation in order to oppose his genuine *ēthos* to that of other, less sincere physicians-cum-philosophers. In the *Therapeutic Method*, for example, Galen distances himself from doctors who try to appear learned, and protests that such pretence of wisdom (what he calls δοξοσοφία, *doxosophia*)<sup>21</sup> constitutes neglect of proper manners (ἀμελήσαντος ἥθους χρηστοῦ), or lack of high moral character:

<sup>18</sup> *Gorgias* 527b 'above all things a man should study not to seem to be good but to actually be so, both in private and in public' (καὶ παντὸς μᾶλλον ἀνδρὶ μελετητέον οὐ τὸ δοκεῖν εἶναι ἀγαθὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶναι, καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ). See also *Gorgias* 464a, where Socrates distinguishes between real and apparent health. Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Oration* 21.4. See also [Chapter 6](#).

<sup>19</sup> ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ οἱ τὸ δοκεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ εἶναι σπουδάσαντες οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἰατρικὴν μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας τέχνας ἐπλεόνασαν, ἡμέληται μὲν τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν τεχνῶν, ἥσκηται δ' ἐξ ὧν ἂν τις εὐδοκίμησῃ παρα τοῖς πολλοῖς, εἰπεῖν τι καὶ πράξαι πρὸς ἡδονήν, κολακεύεσθαι, θεραπευτικῶς προσαγορεύειν ἐκάστης ἡμέρας τοὺς πλουτοῦντάς τε καὶ δυναμένους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι, συμπερέχεσθαι, παραπέμπειν, προερχομένους οἴκαδε δορυφορεῖν, ἐν τοῖς δειπνοῖς βωμολοχεύεσθαι.

<sup>20</sup> Text and translations are by Nutton (1979), the latter with minor alterations.

<sup>21</sup> Attempting to appear wise in the eyes of others regardless of whether one is wise or not can verge on intellectual vanity.



At the present time, the vast majority try to teach others things which they themselves did not ever do or demonstrate to others. It is not surprising, then, that many doctors, being neglectful of proper manners, are more eager for the pretense of wisdom than for truth. My character is not like this. For not just yesterday or the day before, but right from when I was a young lad, gripped by a love of philosophy, did I eagerly turn to that [discipline, i.e. medicine].<sup>22</sup> *MM* 9.4, X.609.2-8 K.<sup>23</sup>

Galen's stance towards *doxosophia* is consistent throughout his writings, as is his readiness to detect it in others whom he does not like. The term occurs most frequently in the *Affections and Errors of the Soul*, where it is always presented as a dangerous passion to be circumvented; whereas in other works, Galen is keen to connect *doxosophia* to a fraudulent understanding of knowledge<sup>24</sup> or associate it with sophists whom he believes to be liars and to distort the truth.<sup>25</sup> However, the important implication emerging from the passage above is that betraying one's devotion to truth renders one less morally authentic (less true to oneself, as it were) and can create serious moral flaws in the community, such as those outlined in the passage from *Prognosis* cited above. The most salient is flattery and the associated morning salutation and continuous attendance that clients were expected to give their patrons. These are indeed enduring themes, dealt with in earlier and coeval satirical works, for instance, those by Juvenal and especially Lucian.<sup>26</sup> However, in Galen these themes are embedded in a

<sup>22</sup> νυνὶ δ' οἱ πλεῖστοι διδάσκουσιν ἄλλους ἐπιχειροῦσιν ἅ μὴτ' αὐτοὶ ποτ' ἔπραξαν μὴτ' ἄλλοις ἐπεδείξαντο. τοὺς μὲν οὖν πολλοὺς τῶν ἰατρῶν οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν ἀμελήσαντας ἦθους χρηστοῦ δοξοσοφίαν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀλήθειαν σπουδᾶσαι. τὸ δ' ἡμέτερον οὐχ ὧδ' ἔχει. οὐ γὰρ δὴ χθὲς ἢ πρῶην, ἀλλ' εὐθύς ἐκ μειρακίου φιλοσοφίας ἐρασθέντες ἐπ' ἐκείνην ἤξαμεν πρῶτον. εἰθ' ὕστερον τοῦ πατρὸς ὄνειράσιν ἐναργέσι προτραπέντος ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ἰατρικῆς ἀσκήσιν ἀφικόμεθα καὶ δι' ὄλου τοῦ βίου τὰς ἐπιστήμας ἐκατέρως ἔργοις μᾶλλον ἢ λόγοις ἐσπουδάσαμεν. *δοξοσοφία* has moral associations elsewhere in Galen, e.g. *Diff. Feb.* 1.3, VII.280.8-281.3 K.

<sup>23</sup> Translation by Johnston and Horsley (2011) with minor alterations. Another apt parallel that opposes Galen's love of truth to other authors' propensity to lie is found in *Good Humour and Bad Humour* 1.14, 69 *Ieraci Bio* = VI.75.5-10 K. See also *Advice to an Epileptic Boy* 1, 1.14-16 Keil = XI.358.2-3 K.: 'Now you probably think that negligence rather than the desire for truth makes me evade writing, a thing of which I have never yet been guilty' (transl. Temkin).

<sup>24</sup> *Diff. Feb.* 1.3, VII.280.8-10 K.

<sup>25</sup> *Cur. Rat. Ven. Sect.* XI.252.10-13 K.: διὸ καὶ μισήσειεν ἂν τις ἦτοι τὴν πανουργίαν τῶν μιαιῶν σοφιστῶν, ὅταν γινώσκοντες ὅτι ψεύδονται, ἐπιτεχνάζονται ἐπιθυμία καινοτομίας, ἢ τὴν δοξοσοφίαν, ὅταν ἀγνοοῦντες τὰ χρησιμώτατα, κατασκευάζουσι τῷ λόγῳ τάναντια. ('One ends up not knowing whether to hate more the wickedness of the accursed sophists, when they eagerly contrive new theories which they know perfectly well to be false, or their concealment of wisdom, when they make up arguments to discredit the most useful remedies, about which, in fact, they know nothing.');

<sup>26</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 1, 127-171 (constant attendance demanded of clients, ills of Roman society); Lucian, *Nigrinus* 14-18 (moral Athens vs. immoral Rome), *Nigr.* 21-25 (salutation and lament over the decline of philosophy); Lucian, *The Dependent Scholar* 3 (salaried philosophers in Rome enjoying

framework where practising physicians play the chief role. In addition, although Lucian laments over the stagnation in philosophy, which he sees as an evil of modern life, Galen focuses more on the decline in medical practice and the abuse of the profession by fraudsters. Therefore, in revisiting the conventional tropes found in satirists, Galen adds moral ramifications to the abuse of medicine in particular.<sup>27</sup> Just as he did in *Recognising the Best Physician* (Chapter 7), he attributes the distortion of truth to the group of flatterer-physicians who defraud their patients (including in relation to prognosis) in morally repugnant ways, e.g. by being charlatans, ‘doorkeepers’ and drinking companions, rather than true healers (*Opt. Med. Cogn.* 9, 115.18-20 I.). For that point of view, Galen’s exposition seems in essence closer to the description of the true doctor, as opposed to vulgar deceivers, in the Hippocratic *On Decorum* 2-4: in that case the former is committed to virtue and simplicity of manners and appearance, while the latter behave disgracefully and flamboyantly.<sup>28</sup> The same note informs the preface to the Hippocratic *Prorrhetic* 2, where extravagant claims made by forecasters about the outcome of the patient’s disease are dismissed by the Hippocratic author, in favour of an experiential prediction based on observation through the senses.<sup>29</sup> Veracity and authenticity, not deception, is what the Hippocratic texts recommend in

luxury), *Merc. cond.* 7 (wealth and luxury), *Merc. Cond.* 12 (envy and antagonism among intellectuals), *Merc. Cond.* 14 (attendance at dinners), *Merc. Cond.* 16 (the client envies the wealth of his patron/host), *Merc. Cond.* 17 (enmity of friends), *Merc. Cond.* 39 (jealousy). The same themes are also mentioned by Plutarch, e.g. *On Having Many Friends* 94A-B. Nutton (1972: 58–59) suggests that Galen and Lucian may have known each other. See Rosen (2010: 331–341) on the influence of Roman satire on Galen, especially in relation to the rhetoric of compulsion that forces satirists to produce their vitriolic pieces.

<sup>27</sup> Maximus of Tyre also uses the theme of medicine’s decline (*Oration* 4.1-2, *Oration* 14.8, *Oration* 28.1), but does not add any moral associations, which further supports Galen’s innovation in this area.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. in Hippocratic *On Decorum* 2, 25.15-19 Heiberg = IX.228.2-6 L., the reader is warned not to be deceived by the appearance of charlatans/deceivers: ‘These are the very men who go around cities, and gather a crowd about them, deceiving it with cheap vulgarity. You should mark them by their dress, and by the rest of their attire; for even if magnificently adorned, they should much more be shunned and hated by those who behold them.’; transl. Jones. (Καὶ γὰρ ἀγορῆν ἐργαζόμενοι, οὗτοι μετὰ βαναυσίης ἀπατέοντες καὶ ἐν πόλεσιν ἀνακυκλέοντες οἱ αὐτοί. Ἴδοι δέ τις ἂν καὶ ἐπ’ ἐσθῆτος καὶ ἐν τῆσιν ἄλλῃσι περιγραφῆσιν· κῆν γὰρ ἔωσιν ὑπερῆφανώς κεκοσμημένοι, ποῦλῦ μᾶλλον φευκτέον καὶ μισητέον τοῖσι θεωμένοισιν εἰσιν). By contrast, the genuine Hippocratic physician has a series of virtues that do not leave any room for dissimulation; see Hippocratic *On Decorum* 3, 25.20-26.6 Heiberg = IX.228.7-20 L. See also the divide between the genuine and the distorted type of medicine, where again purity and clear judgment are distinguishing criteria between the two (*On Decorum* 5, 27.3-9 Heiberg = IX.232.10-234.3 L.). Simplicity is also emphasised in *On Decorum* 12, 28.23-29 Heiberg = IX.238.19-240.4 L.

<sup>29</sup> Hippocratic *Prorrhetic* 2, ch. 1-3, 216.1-224.17 Potter = IX.6.2-14.7 L. The introduction to the *Precepts* develops along similar lines in that it sets out an epistemological basis for medicine according to which truth is attained after rational reasoning has eliminated impressions. See

the field of prognosis, with Galen following the Hippocratics' lead in that respect.

But Galen's protest over the lack of ability seen in doctors and other practitioners of the arts has two parts to it. This time he comes down hard on them for persuading the unsophisticated (τοὺς ἰδιώτας) that they are fashion icons and hence men of importance in society (the emphasis is on their grandiose looks, especially clothes, jewellery and retinue, *Praen.* 1, 68.11-14 N. = XIV.600.5-9 K.). In neutral Galenic contexts the *idiōtai*, unlike doctors, are simply laypeople with no professional background or experience (e.g. *Opt. Sect.* 9, I.123.18-124.5 K.; *Opt. Sect.* 26, I.181.6-12 K.). However, in Second Sophistic writings, as indeed in the *Prognosis* passage above, depending on context, it may function as a derogatory label for the uneducated (the ignorant laypeople) as opposed to the *pepaideumenoi*. That being so, the way one might be expected to persuade such men that they are important would have been through convincing them of their ability to assume cultural capital (*paideia*), not through their appearance. This is presumably one of Galen's subtle shifts of emphasis in order to stress the exceedingly distorted setting in which the agents operated. I will return to this below.

On another level, the verb Galen uses to refer to the manipulation of the *idiōtai* as a vulnerable, easily-led social group is ἀναπείθουσιν, which can mean 'to seduce', 'to mislead',<sup>30</sup> hence pointing to the *sophistic*, rather than the rhetorical, overtones of the practitioners' activity.<sup>31</sup> The coaxing mechanisms employed by the manipulators in *Prognosis*, in fact, bring to mind the sophisms, or fallacies (σοφίσματα), that Galen dismisses in Book 2 of *Affections and Errors of the Soul* on Errors,<sup>32</sup> with both groups displaying striking resemblances in terms of definition, target audience and function.

To begin with, sophisms are defined as 'particular kinds of argument which are false, but wickedly fashioned to resemble the true ones' (λόγοι τινὲς ὄντα ψευδεῖς μὲν, εἰς ὁμοιότητα <δὲ> τῶν ἀληθῶν

Hippocratic *Precepts* 1, 110.4-112.6 Ecce = IX.250.2-252.16 L. On the importance of prediction for the Hippocratic physician, see French (2003: 11-13).

<sup>30</sup> LSJ, s.v. A3.

<sup>31</sup> As seen in *Chapter 7*, n. 27, Galen distinguishes between 'rhetorical' and 'sophistic' with the former pertaining to persuasion, whereas the latter involving deception.

<sup>32</sup> On Galen's pejorative use of the term 'sophist', see von Staden (1997b: 34-36), who cites a range of instructive examples from the Galenic corpus. Also Brunt (1994: 51-52). Galen wrote a dedicated work *On Fallacies Due to Language* (Περὶ τῶν παρὰ τὴν λέξιν σοφισμάτων), an introductory text in logic and the philosophy of language. See Edlow (1977: 3-84). For the definition of sophists, see Eshleman (2008).

πεπτανουργημένοι., *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 49.22-50.2 DB = V.72.10-12 K.). This coincides with the mismatch between appearance and reality in *Prognosis*, which eventually can render beguiling arguments (like sophisms) a powerful means of persuasion in the hands of impostors.<sup>33</sup> The ethical element in the construction of damaging arguments is captured in the participle πεπτανουργημένοι, which refers to mischief on the part of the agent who devises them,<sup>34</sup> just as elsewhere these arguments rightly attract abomination (*odire iustum est*, *CP* 4, 80.18-19 Hankinson). In the same context in *On Errors*, Galen's bald deconstruction of sophisms is rooted in his idea that their falsity makes it difficult for uneducated (ἀπαιδεύτοις) and unschooled (ἀγυμνάστοις) people to decipher them, just as in *Prognosis* it is the ἰδιῶται in particular who are easily tricked by false arguments.<sup>35</sup> Finally, in *On Errors* Galen claims that false beliefs arising from sophisms regarding the goal of life are universally agreed to lead to unhappiness (ἡ γὰρ περὶ τέλους δόξα ψευδῆς ὠμολόγηται πᾶσι πρὸς κακοδαιμονίαν ἄγειν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 51.5-6 DB = V.74.9-10 K.), thus depicting mistaken judgments as stimulants of moral passions, in a similar way to his overall emphasis in this theme in *Prognosis*, as we will now see.

Indeed, the cognitive component in the genesis of emotions is made explicit in the ensuing account in the *Prognosis* prologue. The author explains that the manipulators go about disfiguring reality via two routes depending on their reference group: a) they cajole (ἡδοντες) the rich and powerful in the cities by flattering them for being what they truly are, i.e. rich and powerful, or b) they impress or surprise (ἐκπλήττοντες) the unimportant ones by persuading them they are something they are not. Both the emotions of pleasure and amazement are generated because the agents 'lack any real discrimination in these matters' (ἀνθρώπους ἀπείρους ἀληθινῆς κρίσεως πραγμάτων, *Praen.* 1, 68.15-16 N. = XIV.600.10-11 K.). Again, in the background is Galen's discussion of moral errors. At the beginning of Book 2 *On Errors* Galen explicates the specific sense of the term 'error' (ἀμάρτημα) as referring to things that happen through a mistaken decision (ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ κρίσιν οὐκ ὀρθῆν γιγνομένων, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1, 41.11 DB = V.59.2 K.). Later on, he connects moral errors committed in daily life not just to faulty beliefs but also to the agent's wrongful, rash or weak assent (ψευδῆς συγκατάθεσις ἢ προπετιῆς ἢ

<sup>33</sup> Note that sophisms are likened to thorns and brambles, and barbs and obstacles in *CP* 4, 80.4-14 Hankinson.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. *PHP* 2.5, 138.3-4 DL = V.251.1-2 K.: ἐχθροῦ γὰρ ἀληθείας ἀνδρὸς τὸ πανούργημα ('for the fraud is the mark of a man who hates the truth').

<sup>35</sup> See also *PHP* 9.7, 590.2-11 DL = V.782.3-14 K.; *SMT* 3.1, XI.541.1-14 K.

ἀσθενής), which might be suggestively related to the victims of the *Prognosis*, despite the accusation not being made explicit. For, the unsophisticated match Galen's description of people who (wrongly) assent to premises (or impressions, *phantasiai*, as the Stoics would have called them) without really understanding them (*katalēpsis*) (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1, 42.7-10 DB = V.60.3-6 K.). The victim's yielding to impressions imposed on them by the doctors and other practitioners in *Prognosis* also fits Galen's definition of weak assent as the state when 'we have not yet convinced ourselves that a given belief is true in the same way as that we have five fingers on each hand, or that two times two equals four' (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1, 41.16-19 DB = V.59.7-10 K.). Interestingly, rash assent is an undesirable personal quality that Galen eradicates from his own character, once again acknowledged with aggressive hostility in response to the claims of detractors to the contrary: 'But as in all other [situations] throughout my entire life, I have consistently refrained from rash approval' (ὥσπερ δ' ἐν ἅπασιν τοῖς ἄλλοις καθ' ὅλον τὸν βίον ἑμαυτὸν ἀεὶ προπετοῦς συγκαταθέσεως ἐπέσχον, *Loc. Aff.* 3.3, VIII.142.17-18 K.). This position had also been strongly advocated by other moralists, who said, for example, that 'it is more philosophical to suspend judgment when the truth is obscure than to take sides' (Plutarch, *De Prim. Frig.* 955C).<sup>36</sup>

Through such sustained philosophical theorising on the operation and impact of the distortion of reality, Galen's ideal audience are subtly incited to pursue a self-reflexive reading of *Prognosis*, actively taking sides with Galen against any dissembling affecting their moral condition: shying away from correct judgment would mean suffering moral self-condemnation.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, in *On Errors* false judgment and false assent are said to be so detrimental as to block recognition of good and bad, and thus what one should strive to attain or avoid (περὶ ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ κακῶν γνώσεως τε καὶ κτήσεως καὶ φυγῆς, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 1, 42.10-15 DB = V.60.6-11 K.). Thus the ethical danger that Galen identifies when people lack moral knowledge on an abstract level in *On Errors*, takes on material form in the harassment and victimisation high-profile individuals and the unsophisticated suffer in *Prognosis*.

The most critical stage in Galen's train of thought in the preface to *Prognosis*, however, is when, towards the end of the section, he transposes the accusation of wrongheaded judgment from the victims to the

<sup>36</sup> See also *De Mor.* 46-47 Kr., where Galen analyses rash decision-making, attributing it to foolish and conceited agents.

<sup>37</sup> On the image of the active reader in Galen, see König (2007: 44-45).

victimisers themselves. This he achieves through his revisionary correction (*epanorthōsis*) in the following cutting aside:

by cajoling or impressing men who lack any real discrimination in these matters, they gain great rewards – or so they believe: rather, I should say, they fail to win a true reward but only what they themselves wrongly assume to be so.<sup>38</sup> *Praen.* I, 68.15-16 N. = XIV.600.11-601.2 K.

Galen positions himself authoritatively against the offenders by insinuating that, in deceiving others, they lose any real comprehension of the world around them. This acts as a reassurance for Galen's audience that perplexity, in fact, affects the abusers, who are not the powerful party in a zero-sum game, but really the losers, so that the readers are in turn encouraged not to think highly of them or view their activity favourably. Again *On Errors* is highly relevant here. There Galen sets out the characteristics of a group of manipulators who, just like in *Prognosis*, deceive others as well as themselves (ἐνιοι μὲν αὐτούς, ἐνιοι δ' ἄλλους αναπαίθουσιν, *Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 48.3-5 DB = V.69.11-12 K.), driven by love of reputation and love of money, *inter alia*. These are precisely the worldly incentives associated with the manipulations described in *Prognosis*, which – according to Galen's corrective assertion – are wrongly regarded as genuine goods (οὐ τῶν ὄντως ἀγαθῶν).

Infusing the preface of a post-Classical medical work with ethical preoccupations was common practice in antiquity. In his preface to *On the Composition of Medicines* (epistula dedicatoria I-11), Scribonius Largus, for example, writing around 48 AD, attributes the decline in pharmacological learning in his time to misguided morality. He refers to the lack of expert knowledge on the part of quacks and their related contriving of falsehoods, the heightened desire for monetary gain and glory, and the prevalence of envy among professionals; all conditions he contrasts (in a rather banal fashion) with the earlier reputation and honour of medicine and the proper use of medicaments. However, these are not aspects developed in a literary, rhetorical or discursive way throughout Scribonius's treatise, but rather act as *topoi* of professional ethics, serving the needs of the work's prefatory discussion. We have seen that Galen is quite original in his use of similar *topoi*, in that he entangles them with: a) elaborated social criticism, b) a heightened focus on theorising and defining the origins of the emotions by

<sup>38</sup> τὰ δ' ἐκπλήττοντες ἀνθρώπους ἀπείρους ἀληθινῆς κρίσεως πραγμάτων, ὡς μὲν αὐτοὶ νομίζουσιν, ἀγαθῶν πολλῶν τυγχάνουσιν, ὡς δ' ἐγὼ φαίην ἂν, οὐ τῶν ὄντως ἀγαθῶν ἀλλ' ὧν αὐτοὶ ψευδῶς ὑπειλήφασιν.

drawing on his philosophical exposition on moral error tackled in his ethical work and c) practical advice (direct and implied) on how to cope with them.<sup>39</sup>

### **The proem to Book 1 of the *Therapeutic Method*: A complementary intertext**

Even though the abuse of reality in the *Prognosis* preface is general enough to include both doctors and the proponents of other arts, one soon comes to realise that Galen's intended emphasis is specifically on medicine and physicians. This becomes more obvious when he describes the 'further enormities' (τᾶλλα παρανομεῖν) attributed to manipulators: namely that they announce that they can teach their art in a short period of time and gather many students with the aim of acquiring public influence (*Praen.* 1, 68.17-21 N. = XIV.600.13-17 K.). This, of course, echoes stock accusations against rhetoric and its proponents as expounded in the *Protagoras*, for example, which in turn resembles the heavily Platonic background of the proem. Yet, the quoted lines are better construed in the light of the proem to Book 1 of Galen's *Therapeutic Method*, where many common ideas feature, particularly in connection with the moral transgressions of doctors. As I will show, the two proems may be seen as complementary pieces in Galen's ethically-informed discussion of medicine.

In his address to the recipient of this work, Hiero, Galen protests that he had been hesitant to compose the *Therapeutic Method*, because in his days nobody was eager to learn the truth (μηδενὸς τῶν νῦν ἀνθρώπων . . . ἀλήθειαν σπουδάζοντος). Instead, what his contemporaries strove for was a series of external goods, including money, political power and pleasure, all of which in Galen's account are presented as clouding agents' judgment and leading them to commit moral errors. For instance, they think that there is no such thing as knowledge of divine and human matters and, similarly, they do not consider it worthwhile to pursue the arts, holding expertise in them to be sheer madness (*MM* 1.1, X.1.9-2.10 K.). Here we see that the philosophical explanation given in *On Errors* again applies, since what Galen is suggesting is that false suppositions about life goals are the source of moral mistakes.

But beyond that, it is also worth noting that the *Therapeutic Method* intertext is much more vociferous as to Galen's own place in the narrative

<sup>39</sup> Pace Petit (2018: 135–136), who does not accept there is any originality on Galen's part in the preface to *Prognosis*.

that privileges affectation over truth. In denouncing the dystopian character of contemporary life, particularly its ‘universal deceit’, by telling the truth, Galen credits himself with what is regarded as a ‘revolutionary act’, in the words of the quote introducing this Chapter. That helps explain why Galen claims to be a lone fighter: we read that he was criticised for pursuing the truth with excessive zeal (πολλάκις ἐπετίμησαν ὡς πέρα τοῦ μετρίου τὴν ἀλήθειαν σπουδάζοντι, *MM* I.1, X.2.11-12 K.), and that his refusal to throw in his lot with those who told lies and their deceitful undertakings marked him out as a useless renegade in their eyes:<sup>40</sup>

[They say] that, throughout my whole life, I shall never be of use, either to myself or to them, unless I take some time off from this pursuit of truth and go around greeting people in the early morning and dining with those who are powerful in the evening.<sup>41</sup> *MM* I.1, X.2.12-16 K.

The Roman custom of the morning salutation and dancing attendance on powerful patrons constitute the kind of behaviour that provoke the accusations Galen levels against the offenders in *Prognosis*, as noted above. Yet, the *Therapeutic Method* proem goes a step further in articulating the cultural depravation resulting from flawed morals. The marginalisation of truth and the engagement with the pleasures of the body typified by dancing, amorous adventures and bathing, *inter alia*, have even corrupted the genuine character of the symposium, which instead of being focused on the acculturation of its participants, now shamefully promotes intoxication and incontinence (*MM* I.1, X.2.16-3.18 K.).

The failure of the convivial institution to function as it should is marked by a radical change of moral axioms and hierarchies: ‘For the best among them is not the one who plays most musical instruments or engages in philosophical arguments, but the one who quaffs the most and the biggest bowls of wine’, *MM* I.1, X.3.16-18 K.<sup>42</sup> This reversal of expectations is taken up by Lucian in his comic dialogue *The Symposium or The Lapiths*, a parody of the Platonic symposium. The narrative centres around a wedding feast, in which many highly literate men took part, including philosophers, doctors and orators. However, as the narrator Lycinus soon makes

<sup>40</sup> Galen is conscious that being a lover of truth is a very rare quality among his contemporaries, see e.g. *Dig. Puls.* 2.2, VIII.859.16-860.3 K.

<sup>41</sup> καὶ ὡς οὐθ’ ἑαυτῷ μέλλοντι χρησίμῳ γενήσεσθαι παρ’ ὅλον τὸν βίον οὔτε ἐκείνοις, εἰ μὴ σχολάσασαι μὲν τι τῆς τοσαύτης περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν σπουδῆς, προσαγορεύοιμι δὲ περιερχόμενος ἔωθεν, εἰς ἑσπέραν τε συνδειπνοῦμι τοῖς δυναμένοις.

<sup>42</sup> ἄριστος γὰρ ἐν τούτοις οὐχ ὁ πλείστων ἀψάμενος ὀργάνων μουσικῶν ἢ λόγων φιλοσόφων, ἀλλ’ ὁ παμπόλλας καὶ μεγίστας ἐκπιῶν κύλικας.



clear, these *pepaideumenoi* transgress moral limits by displaying the kind of social behaviour that was utterly incompatible with the standards of the education they had attained: instead of exhibiting self-control, they got drunk and overate, they were indecent and quarrelsome, and things ended up so topsy-turvy (ἀνέστραπτο οὖν τὸ πρᾶγμα) that ordinary people (the ἰδιῶται) appeared more civilised than the eggheads (*Symposium*, 34-35). The symposium becomes a Foucauldian ‘heterotopia of deviation’, a cultural space inhabited by individuals whose conduct is outside the norm.

Just as in Lucian’s *Symposium* the proper display of *paideia* is brutally reversed and undermined, so too in Galen the perverted version of the symposium functions as an allegory for the mishandling of the medical art, since drunkenness in particular is what Galen uses to explain the mistaken choice of doctors by the inebriated.<sup>43</sup> The latter opt not for the best physicians but for those most inclined to flattery (κολακευτικωτάτους, *MM* I.I, X.3.18-4.8 K.), thus once again introducing this important error of judgment that can also be found in the *Prognosis* preface. Yet once again, the *Therapeutic Method* account is more detailed and pointed and, taken together with the *Prognosis* account, it gives a fuller picture of how Galen envisages the status of such doctors/flatterers: the author is blunt that this group of doctors are far from professionals, because they obey their patients like slaves (πᾶν ὑπηρετήσουσι τὸ προσταττόμενον ὥσπερ ἀνδράποδα, *MM* I.I, X.4.8-9 K.). This is in stark contrast to the Asclepiadian doctors of ancient times, who according to Galen represent the genuine version of physicians, given that they had true power over their patients; they were like generals and kings (*MM* I.I, X.4.9-11 K.). The distorted power dynamics between these physicians and their patients, spelled out in the *Therapeutic Method* and implied in the *Prognosis*, helps Galen emphasise the moral deviation of some physicians on account of their flattery: ‘Thus it is not the man who is better at the craft, but the man who is cleverer at flattery who is more honoured’ (*MM* I.I, X.4.13-14 K.). This also ties in with the Platonic dimensions of the slavery imagery that Galen uses in *Recognising the Best Physician* to juxtapose the servility of impostors to his own moral independence and purity as the ideal doctor, as we have seen in [Chapter 7](#).

<sup>43</sup> Drunkenness is what Galen accuses doctors themselves of elsewhere in the *Therapeutic Method*, e.g. I.9, X.76.15-18 K. (though not in the *Prognosis* proem): ‘There is not, in fact, the free time for them to seek truth when, in the early morning, they busy themselves with greetings, which they call “salutations”, while in the evening they eat to excess and get drunk.’ (οὐδὲ γὰρ σχολή γε αὐτοῖς ἔστιν ἀλήθειαν ζητεῖν, ἔωθεν μὲν ἐν ἀσπασμοῖς διατρίβουσιν, οὓς αὐτοὶ καλοῦσιν ἀσπασμούς, εἰς ἑσπέραν δ’ ἐμπιπλαμένοις τε καὶ μεθυσκομένοις).

It is at this point in the *Therapeutic Method* that Galen introduces his condemnation of Thessalus, a physician of the first century AD and thought to be the founder of the Methodic sect,<sup>44</sup> whom he vituperates for making a fortune overnight and acquiring many students by tactical use of flattery. The relevant reference in *Therapeutic Method* 1.1, X.4.16-5.3 K. resonates with the corresponding section of *Prognosis* 1, 68.17-21 N. = XIV.600.13-17 K. and helps flesh it out. The passage from the *Therapeutic Method* conjures up an opposition between the ideal(ised) classical past, in which genuine physicians struggled to perfect their art without any reliance on flattery (what he calls ‘noble rivalry’, ἀγαθὴ ἔρις), and a debased present in which ‘worthless contention’ (ἡ πονηρὰ ἔρις) dominates (*MM* 1.1, X.5.15-7.9 K.; very much like the preface to *Recognising the Best Physician*).<sup>45</sup> It is to this kind of contention, the destructive ἔρις, that Galen attributes Thessalus’s erroneous perceptions of the proper training for doctors.<sup>46</sup> For he opined that doctors should neither be familiar with the noble disciplines nor have any clinical experience (*MM* 1.1, X.5.3-9 K.). Galen considers this claim counterintuitive and ironically concludes that according to Thessalus’s way of thinking even untutored people such as cobblers, carpenters, dyers and blacksmiths could contend for pre-eminence (περὶ τῶν πρωτείων ἐριζουσι, *MM* 1.1, X.5.9-12 K.) in the realm of medicine. This he finds so unacceptable that he no longer wants to write his *Therapeutic Method* due to vexation.

The moral decadence that existed in the field of medicine is a regular excuse for not producing works in *Prognosis*, where in a similar fashion Galen states that, had he known that his works would be distributed to the unworthy (ἀναξίους), whom he specifies as being corrupt at heart (μοχθηροὶ τὴν ψυχὴν), he would not have given them even to his friends.<sup>47</sup> This shows that Galen foresaw not just a morally-regulated

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g. López Férez (2010: 365). See also Chapter 3.

<sup>45</sup> See also *Dig. Puls.* 2.2, VIII.868.18-869.12 K. on bitter contention.

<sup>46</sup> Thessalus’s flawed judgment is emphasised elsewhere as a source of his moral depravity in the context of the same account, e.g. when Galen directs some scathing lines from Euripides’s *Orestes* 258-259 at him: ‘Rest quiet in your bed, miserable one, for you see none of the things you think you know clearly’ (*MM* 1.2, X.13.3-4 K.). The same lines are used extensively in Plutarch’s moral works. For ignorance of logic as a medical vice in Galen, see Barnes (1991: 56-65).

<sup>47</sup> Rosen (2010: 330) refers to what he sees as another Galenic pattern in the genesis of texts: ‘he [i.e. Galen] is roused to a didactic mode [i.e. associated with the composition of works] in response to an ignorance that he portrays as unconscionable and unbearable. In so much of Galen’s discourse there is a persistent attitude of beleaguering on the question of why he wrote, and a tension between his desire to dissociate himself completely from the intellectual wasteland he sees around him and to fight against it ...’. I have tried to show that other people’s ethical depravity is another such Galenic pattern.

medical community but also a morally-regulated audience for his works and that he paid particular attention to the ethics of reading and consumption in general. Ideally he expects his tract to be taken up for the sake of learning and not in order to viciously attack its main points (*Praen.* 9, 120.3-6 N. = XIV.651.1-5 K.). By the same token, he is blunt that his work will be of use only if it presumes readers who are zealous for the truth, persons of energy, enthusiasm and prudence, not pleasure-seekers, insatiable for wealth and fame or lazy wastrels (*Dig. Puls.* 1.1, VIII.773.6-774.5 K.). In *The Order of My Own Books* he declares that the real value of this work is not so much to enhance factual knowledge for readers practised in logic, but to instil correct thinking, including an ability to acknowledge proper ethical qualities when they see them (*Ord. Lib. Prop.* 2, 91.13-92.4 Boudon-Millot = XIX.53.10-54.4 K.). This shows that Galen's production has a strong ethical outlook. And the programmatic prologue of *On My Own Books* should be interpreted in the same light. Here Galen censures colleagues in medicine and philosophy for having the nerve to lecture publicly, though they cannot even read properly. This kind of bad behaviour he calls 'scheming', 'intrigue' (ῥαδιουργία), thereby adding a distinctively moral inflection to his criticism (*Lib. Prop.* Prolog. 4, 135.2-9 Boudon-Millot = XIX.9.7-13 K.). Galen's insinuation here is not so different from the ones analysed from the prefaces to *Prognosis* or *Therapeutic Method*, in which semblance and false impressions (unlike genuine ability and truth) signify moral bankruptcy in the oral and written discourse of Galen's world.

In resuming the topic of Thessalus's contentious argument, Galen dwells on the fact that the latter criticises Hippocrates (mainly for his theories on the nature of man) and has shamefully proclaimed himself a champion and the winner in the contest with the father of medicine. Such misguided perceptions drove Thessalus to both foolishness and insolence (*hybris*) according to Galen (elsewhere Thessalus is shameless and reckless), which flags up the by now familiar pattern of a false assumption leading to moral error, but also this time to moral *passion* (*MM* 1.2, X.7.10-8.13 K.). In fact, Galen's hostility to Thessalus culminates in a speech he levels against him, which takes the form of insults mixed with character assassination.

For a start, Galen accuses Thessalus of discrediting those things that are good (διαβάλλειν . . . τὰ χρηστὰ, *MM* 1.2, X.8.13 K.) in his attempt to stand out from the crowd (διὰ τὸ παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς εὐδοκμεῖν, *MM* 1.2, X.8.14 K.). We have already seen that this specific phrase also occurs in the

*Prognosis* proem,<sup>48</sup> where it signifies that seeking popular reputation obstructs the development of the arts, which is precisely what Galen criticises Thessalus for in the *Therapeutic Method*. In addition, just as in the *Prognosis* proem, development of the arts is intertwined with love of truth, so in the *Therapeutic Method* too Thessalus is attacked for neglecting to excel in things that are true, or being diligent and a lover of truth (ἐνὸν ὑπερβάλλεσθαι τοῖς ἀληθείαις, εἰ φιλόπονός τε τις εἴης καὶ ἀληθείας ἐραστής, *MM* 1.2, X.8.14-15 K.). Similar themes regarding reputation are again dealt with in Galen's second proem to the *Therapeutic Method* (Book 7), this time addressed to Eugenianus, in which Galen eschews desire for popular reputation as a trait of his own character (εὐδοκιμεῖν is here replaced with δόξα, marked in bold in the passages in nn. 49–51).<sup>49</sup> Likewise, he considers reputation a hindrance to virtue,<sup>50</sup> truth and knowledge.<sup>51</sup> Although here the text suggests that his despising of popular reputation was the result of a tendency that he had instilled in himself already in his youth, in *Therapeutic Method* 10.4, X.609.2-8 K. and elsewhere, Galen explicitly connects this virtue to the early education he received from his father. This is in stark contrast to Thessalus's depravity, stemming from his vulgar father and effeminate education (unlike Galen's hypermasculine paternal *paideia*).<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Republic* Book 10, 605a: Ὁ δὴ μιμητικός ποιητὴς δῆλον ὅτι οὐ πρὸς τὸ τοιοῦτον τῆς ψυχῆς πέφυκε τε καὶ ἡ σοφία αὐτοῦ τούτῳ ἀρέσκειν πέπηγεν, εἰ μέλλει εὐδοκιμῆσειν ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ ἀγανακτικόν τε καὶ ποικίλον ἦθος διὰ τὸ εὐμίμητον εἶναι. Δῆλον. ('Then the imitative poet who aims at being popular is not by nature made, nor is his art intended, to please or to affect the rational principle in the soul; but he will prefer the passionate and fitful temper, which is easily imitated? Clearly'.)

<sup>49</sup> *MM* 7.1, X.456.5-7 K.: 'For you know that I wrote neither this nor any other treatise to advance my popular reputation . . .' (οἴσθα γὰρ ὡς οὔτε ταύτην οὔτε ἄλλην τινὰ πραγματεῖαν ἔγραψα τῆς **παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἐπιμένοιο δόξης** . . .)

<sup>50</sup> *MM* 7.1, X.457.4-8 K.: 'Those who choose a quiet life, those who derive benefit from philosophy and are self-sufficient when it comes to the care of the body, find a reputation among the many to be of no little hindrance, drawing them further away from a concern with the things that are best.' (ὄσοι γὰρ ἡσυχον εἴλοντο βίον, ὠφελήμενοι μὲν ἐκ τῆς φιλοσοφίας, αὐτάρκη δ' ἔχοντες τὰ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος θεραπείαν, τούτοις ἐμπόδιον οὐ μικρὸν ἐστὶν **ἢ παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς δόξα**, περαιτέρω τοῦ προσήκοντος ἀπάγουσα τῶν καλλίστων αὐτοῦς.)

<sup>51</sup> *MM* 7.1, X.457.11-15 K.: 'Remarkably, from my youth, and I do not know how – whether being inspired or crazy, or whatever you might wish to call it – I have despised the opinion of the majority and have set my heart on truth and knowledge, thinking no possession to be better or more divine for men.' (ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως εὐθύς ἐκ μεираκίου θαυμαστώως, ἢ ἐνθέςως, ἢ μανικῶς, ἢ ὅπως ἂν τις ὀνομάζειν ἐθέλη, **κατεφρόνησα μὲν τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων δόξης**, ἐπεθύμησα δὲ ἀληθείας καὶ ἐπιστήμης, οὐδὲν εἶναι νομίσας οὔτε κάλλιον ἀνθρώποις οὔτε θεϊότερον κτήμα.)

<sup>52</sup> *MM* 1.2, X.10.1-14 K.; cf. *MM* 1.3, X.22.5-17 K. In *On Crises* 2.3, 136.25-137.7 Alexanderson = IX.657.14-658.5 K. Galen plays up Thessalus's effeminacy to do even more damage to his character. He calls him γραιὺς (an 'old woman'), a derisive appellation used in Greek comedy for an old man. LSJ, s.v. A.

Moreover, Galen's moral account in the *Therapeutic Method* also references the dissimulation elements found in sophistic practices, much as we have seen in the *Prognosis*. In a separate section, Galen blames Thessalus for appointing his father's fellow craftsmen to judge doctors, so that by this cunning ploy he can be the winner in a 'fixed' competition. Even though his father's fellow craftsmen are not further described in this context, it is reasonable to argue that they are meant to represent the class of sophists for two reasons.

Firstly, they are juxtaposed a bit further on in the text to a group of 'men of old', whose characteristics prompt us to identify them with philosophers proper of the Socratic type. They are described as 'men who were skilled in dialectic and capable of knowledge, who were practised in distinguishing truth and falsehood, who knew how to differentiate consequence and contradiction as they ought, and men who had given careful attention to the demonstrative method from childhood' (*MM* 1.2, X.9.3-6 K.). Indeed, these are the same features Galen himself ascribes to philosophers in another passage further below (*MM* 1.2, X.18.2-13 K.), identifying them as the supporters of Plato, Aristotle and Chrysippus.

Secondly, these craftsmen correspond to Galen's definition of sophists in *Prognosis*, in a section in which Galen states that 'some rhetorical gentlemen' (τινὰς τῶν ῥητορικῶν ἀνδρῶν) are engaged with demonstrative theory not for its actual philosophical merits, but only when they want to use 'that disreputable instrument, the so-called sophistic theory' (ὀργάνῳ πανούργῳ, τῇ σοφιστικῇ καλουμένῃ θεωρίᾳ, χρῆσθαι, *Praen.* 1, 74.2-6 N. = XIV.605.2-5 K.).<sup>53</sup>

All in all, Galen's description of the moral aberrancy of the medical profession in the *Prognosis* proem is expanded upon and made more forceful in the *Therapeutic Method* prologue to Book 1, where more details are given about some important issues. For example: a) the target of Galen's attack is made more precise, taking the form of the wicked representative of medicine's nadir, Thessalus; b) Galen's own role in the attack is clearer and punchier, as he endorses truth and dismisses falsehood,

<sup>53</sup> Galen's disdain for sophists is best captured in the way they are contrasted with doctors with regard to truth: e.g. 'the physician who is both highly skilled and truthful is esteemed, whereas a sophist squanders both his own time and that of his pupils in quarrels over names and what they mean.' (ὁ ἰατρός ἀκριβῶς τε καὶ ἀληθῶς εὐδοκμεῖ, σοφιστῆς δὲ κατατρίβει τὸν χρόνον ἑαυτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν, ὑπὲρ ὀνομάτων τε καὶ σημασινομένων ἐρίζων), Galen's *Hipp. Epid. I*, 3, 5 116.11-13 WP = XVIIA.231.7-9 K. Rosen (2010) has argued that Galen's vituperation of sophists and the emphasis on his own self-righteousness springs from satirical writings and has an inherently didactic function.

especially its ‘disreputable instrument’, sophistry; and c) the implied condemnation of sophists in the *Prognosis* is given free rein in the *Therapeutic Method*, where it is tied up with contention (*eris*), its infamous guiding force.

### Truth as a moral end in the context of a despair narrative

A separate section of *Prognosis* explicates the common ill (κοινή . . . δυστυχία) of Imperial-period society in the light of the subverted state of medicine in particular, thus refining the more general social outlook Galen seems to be presenting in the proem. The most important characteristic of the decline in medicine is the way doctors are refraining from speaking their minds and the vanity of *parrhēsia* on the part of the medical predictor. As the text explains, if a physician competently predicts a certain disease, he risks attracting his colleagues’ hatred and losing their respect; he is in danger of being considered a sorcerer (an offence punishable by death at the time)<sup>54</sup> and is generally faced with suspicion as being a monstrosity and a rarity.<sup>55</sup> In a debauched medical landscape of this sort free speech is under threat, since the predictor often does not dare (τολμᾶν) reveal the source of a correct prognosis (whether his own discovery or by consultation of earlier authorities) and finds himself in a predicament, debating with himself (διαβουλεύόμενος) and being hesitant (*Praen.* 1, 68.22–70.25 N. = XIV.600.17–602.14 K.). The attribution of mental deliberation to the genuine type of physician is key, because, as we will see, this is the determining feature which sets him apart from arrivistes and wicked men normally devoid of such skills. On another level, the predictor’s rational position incites his enemies’ envy (*phthonos*), leading them to conspire against him using poisoning or exile.

The above reversal of moral standards in the functioning of the medical profession naturally introduces into the discussion Galen’s self-professed type of medicine, which is pursued in a philosophical manner (φιλοσόφως; see the passage cited below) and implicitly contrasted to sophistic manifestations, as analysed above. One would therefore expect to find in this new section more wholly positive scenarios exemplifying this

<sup>54</sup> Nutton (1979: 150), Hankinson (2005: 157).

<sup>55</sup> Similar accusations against Galen appear in *Recognising the Best Physician* 3–4, 61.14–63.14 I. For the distinction between rational medicine and divination in *Prognosis*, see Barton (1994: 138–140). On Galen and the role of the divine, see van der Eijk (2014a). On Galen’s embracing divination as a parallel art to medicine, see van Nuffelen (2014). On prognosis and divination in Hippocratic authors, see Langholf (1990: 232–254). Cf. von Staden (2003).

morally-administered medicine, as in Dio of Prusa's *Orations* 77/78, ch. 8–10 and 14, for example. In that case Dio candidly denounces the envy among medical professionals in a big city, considering it a mark of insanity. His main point is that the need to restore public health should override the physician's self-centred desires for distinction, and that the amassing of personal wealth and honours has no place in a serious pursuit like medicine, where colleagues should be collaborators, not venal enemies. The distinction between usefulness and pleasure underlies other similar passages, as evinced, for instance, in Galen's own use of the Platonic opposition between a doctor and a cook (*Praen.* 1, 74.8–11 N. = XIV.605.8–12 K.; also seen in [Chapter 7](#)),<sup>56</sup> which might also have facilitated a similar transition to a direct display of philosophical medicine to the one Dio makes. And yet our author does not go down this path. What he does instead is to delve into the numerous ways in which adhering to truth, showing moral integrity and generally doing one's duty could have damaging consequences in society. The passage is worth citing in full, not least because it raises a number of ethically-loaded points of interest:

Thus, whoever wants to pursue the art of medicine in a philosophical manner worthy of the sons of Asclepius must suffer one of two things: either he can go into exile like Quintus and keep the rewards of his perception untarnished, or, leaving himself wide open to calumny, he can, if he lacks spirit, put forward a justification and then cower back, living like a hare, trembling in constant expectation of disaster – while nevertheless increasing others' suspicions of sorcery. If he has greater courage and joins battle, fighting alone against many wicked men, well practised in many ways of crime, himself relying upon his education and learning and innocent of such evils, he will be taken by force, from then on he will be in their power, however they should wish to use him. Even if he holds out longer and continues the struggle by some remarkable luck, he

<sup>56</sup> Drawing on *Gorgias* 464d–e, 521d–e; cf. *Politicus* 289a. Similarly, in *Matters of Health* (2.11, 69.5–11 Ko. = VI.156.1–7 K.) Galen regards the cook as a servant (ὑπηρέτης) of the doctor, since the former is not acquainted with the potency of the foodstuffs he is preparing or which of the preparations is the best, unlike the doctor who knows the potency of every preparation. Therefore, compared with the cook, the doctor is always superior in that he is a representative of practicality and usefulness, not ostentatious pleasure. See also Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates's 'Epidemics VI'*, where again the cook is inferior to the doctor in terms of technical expertise: 5, 1, 255.8–17 Wenkebach = XVIIIB.225.17–226.11 K.; and esp. 5, 1, 257.2–258.7 Wenkebach = XVIIIB.229.12–231.18 K. See also *The Capacities of Foodstuffs* 2.51, 159.3–11 Wilkins = VI.638.18–639.7 K., where physicians aim to derive benefits from foods, whereas cooks aim only at pleasure. Cf. *Alim. Fac.* 2.27, 133.5–12 Wilkins = VI.609.7–12 K., where a good doctor should also be a good cook. See Plutarch's fragm. 147 (Sandbach) from his work *On the Art of Prophecy*, for a similar division of the arts into those grounded in necessity and those defined by pleasure.

cannot escape being caught up in that most dreaded of wars, internecine strife, both as attacker and attacked.<sup>57</sup> *Praen.* I, 70.25-72.12 N. = XIV.602.14-603.12 K.

The presentation of opposing scenarios together with their accompanying results seems to have (some fairly distant) Platonic echoes here: e.g. the way Socrates in the *Apology* discusses the choice between going into exile or staying in Athens at risk of his life, the description in the *Republic* of what is likely to happen to philosophers who go back into the Cave, or Callicles's threats in the *Gorgias* about what Socrates risks if he carries on with philosophy instead of switching to oratory. Yet, in this extract Galen builds up a script of despair, emphasising that in the current moral climate, whatever route the predictor chooses to follow, he is destined to fail. If he is brave enough to preserve his moral authenticity, he will have to suffer exile, otherwise if he is cowardly, he will experience fear instead. Interestingly, the word 'fear' is not used in the text, but only evoked through Galen's analysis of its subjective phenomenology (an emphasis on what emotions feel like rather than on how they might be objectively defined): e.g. a) reference is made to the physical symptom of trembling and b) the emotion is depicted using the simile from the natural world 'like a hare'. The narrative of suffering (παθεῖν) in every possible way not only encapsulates Galen's indignation at the current situation but also arouses readers' indignation, as they would have felt the dismay evoked in the ensuing metaphors concerning the inevitable defeat of both the attacker and the attacked in a harsh civil war.<sup>58</sup>

It is this sense of inevitability that drives Galen's argument. The author explains that even men with a pure regard for truth (ἄλογοι τετιμῆκασιν ἀλήθειαν εἰλικρινῶς, *Praen.* I, 72.14 N. = XIV.603.14 K.) are doomed to hopelessness. They are described as men who appreciate truth not for its

<sup>57</sup> ὥστε δυσὶν θάτερον ἀναγκαῖον γίνεται παθεῖν τὸν φιλοσόφως τὴν τέχνην μετιόντα καὶ τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν ἀξίως ἢ παραπλησίως Κοῖντῳ φυγαδευθέντα λαμπρὰ τῆς αἰσθήσεως τὰ πείριαιρα κομίσασθαι ἢ διαβαλλόμενόν γε φανερώς, εἰ μὲν ἀτοληρότερος εἴη, τὰ μὲν ἀπολογούμενον, τὰ δ' ὑποπτήσσοντα λαγῶ βίον ζῆν, αἰεὶ τρέμοντα καὶ τι πείσεσθαι προσδοκῶντα πρὸς τῷ καὶ τὴν τῆς γοητείας ὑποψίαν αὐξάνειν· εἰ δ' εὐτονώτερος ὢν ὁμοσε χωρεῖ καὶ διαμάχεται μόνος πολλοῖς πανούργοις ἀνθρώποις καὶ πολλοῖς ἀδικημάτων τρόπους ἡσκηκόσιν αὐτὸς ἐκ παιδείας καὶ μαθημάτων ὀρμώμενος καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἀπειρος κακῶν, ἦτοι κατὰ κράτος ἀλόγιστα γενέσθαι τὸ λοιπὸν ἐπ' ἐκείνοις, ὅτι ἂν αὐτῷ χρῆσθαι βουληθῶσιν· ἢ εἴπερ ἐπὶ πλέον ἀντέχει καὶ διαγωνίζοιτο τύχη τινὶ χρῆσάμενος θαυμαστῆ, τὸ μὲν οὖν αἰεὶ πολεμεῖν τε καὶ πολεμεῖσθαι τὸν χερίστον τῶν πολέμων, ὃν ὀνομάζουσιν ἐμφύλιον, ἐκφεύγειν μὴ δύνασθαι.

<sup>58</sup> Galen is especially sensitive as to the implications of civil strife, considering it the most widespread type of disease (the other three types of disease being disease of the body, the soul, and in animals and plants), *PHP* 5.2, 302.20-26 DL = V.442.1-8 K.



externals but for its own sake (οὐ διὰ τι τῶν ἕξωθεν ἀλλ' αὐτὴν δι' ἑαυτῆς, *Praen.* I, 72.14–15 N. = XIV.603.15 K.), a formulation suggesting that for them truth translates to a moral end, just as in Aristotelian ethical theory happiness is the only end or good desired for its own sake. So, Galen contends, as soon as they experience the injustice and 'clearly understand' (γνώσι σαφῶς, *Praen.* I, 72.16 N. = XIV.603.16–17 K.) – another sign of their robust rational abilities, see above, pp. 18–19 – that they cannot benefit society amidst such degradation, lovers of truth will eventually retreat into philosophical isolation.

We have seen that in other moral contexts Galen does not propose withdrawal from public life to ensure peace of mind, just as he does not recommend complete elimination of emotions as a point of dogma. In this case arguing in favour of not playing one's part in society fits the narrative of despair that emphasises the corrosive effects of wickedness, injustice and falsehood upon philosophically-minded men, who were often forced into retirement as a result of this dreadful condition. This suggestion is buttressed by the [following section](#) in the narrative, which explains that cutting oneself off from society in essence can be equated with rejecting the rabble (τοῦ τῶν πολλῶν συρφετοῦ) and popular reputation (εὐδοκιμεῖν παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀνθρώποις) as scoundrels (τοῖς πανούργοις). Philosophically-spirited men, Galen stresses, decisively choose knowledge and the friendship of the gods as well as association with the most noble men (γνώριμοι δὲ καὶ φίλοι μάλιστα μὲν καὶ πρῶτον θεοῖς, εἶτα τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς ἀρίστοις; all passages in this paragraph from *Praen.* I, 72.15–21 N. = XIV.603.15–604.5 K.). This is the kind of behaviour he recommends to his colleagues and fellow citizens.

### The discourse on malice

The description of the ethical quandaries faced by physicians in Rome provides the basic framework in which the case narratives that follow may be gauged from a moral standpoint. The first clinical encounter revolves around Eudemus the Peripatetic philosopher, a patient suffering from quartan fever.<sup>59</sup> Eudemus is a key character with remarkable cultural credentials in the text, since he is Galen's philosophy teacher and a Pergamene intellectual immersed in Greek *paideia* residing at Rome.<sup>60</sup> What is more, he is also vital from a narratological perspective because, as we will see, by the end of chapter 4 he has been progressively redefined

<sup>59</sup> On Galen and his patients, see Mattern (2013: 224–256).

<sup>60</sup> See Boudon-Millot (2000).

from being a mere patient to an agent passing on moral capital. His position in the exchanges also allows Galen the character to shift his authority according to the demands of the story, from teacher and guide, to a student who also advises and guides. Finally, Eudemus's case facilitates the inclusion of a long section on malice, which takes the form of an embedded digression inserted just after the beginning of the second case history, that of a young man (from *Praen.* 2, 78.3 N. = XIV.608.18 K. onwards). In reality, even if his role as a patient actually comes to an end early on, Eudemus does not abandon his part as Galen's philosophical interlocutor. His presence, just like that of Epigenes, extends across the narrative to enable Galen the character to communicate his moralising.

The performative facets of Galen's prognoses (especially the amazement he excites in spectators), the praise and indeed the censure he receives from high-status officials and intellectuals, as well as any strictly medical aspects pertaining to the prognostication of illnesses have already been studied by others. However, the case histories as moral textual entities have previously gone unnoticed, in all likelihood because of their rhetorical sophistication, which *prima facie* makes them look like Second Sophistic vehicles for providing 'liveliness and variety'.<sup>61</sup> Through the various group scenes, particularly those with his medical opponents, I would argue, Galen the persona produces an intricate discourse on malice, in which he draws attention to his exonerated moral *ēthos* as a strategy to reinforce his medical and philosophical self-presentation while demolishing that of his attackers (cf. Chapter 3).

The starting point to that comes with the doctor Antigenes,<sup>62</sup> who ridicules Galen (καταγελῶν twice, *Praen.* 3, 82, 13 and 17 N. = XIV.613, 13 and 17 K.) for being unable to treat Eudemus's fevers. The Galenic narrator informs us that Antigenes was considered the physician *par excellence* in Rome at the time (most probably insinuating that he was not, in the light of his ensuing moral denunciation by Galen) and that he addressed both the *idiōtai* (laymen) and the medical experts when traducing Galen. Antigenes's scornful attitude is summarised in the following remarks put into his mouth: 'Look at Eudemus: he is in his sixty-third year; he has had three quartan attacks in mid-winter; and Galen promises to cure him!' (*Praen.* 3, 82.20-22 N. = XIV.614.3-5 K.). That this is

<sup>61</sup> Nutton (1979: 185): 'This digression on the malice of Galen's Roman enemies ends abruptly and is not linked closely with the general narrative. It is a rhetorical set piece inserted into the middle of the story to give liveliness and variety.'

<sup>62</sup> About whom we know very little beyond what we read about him in Galen's anecdote; see Nutton (1979: 167).

articulated in direct speech is most pertinent, because direct speech is as a rule used by Galen to boost his own central role, either through self-referential comments (e.g. *Praen.* 2, 80.7-10 N. = XIV.611.10-13 K.) or unfair attacks made on him by others, as in this case.

As a matter of fact, in this instance we have a combination of both modes, given that Antigenes's attack on Galen is counterbalanced by Galen's self-justification, which is apparently endorsed by Epigenes:

I know that you, my dear Epigenes, constantly trumpeted my later predictions in this case and my treatment, but here for the first time there arose jealousy because I was winning admiration for my dignified way of life as well as for my professional successes.<sup>63</sup> *Praen.* 3, 82.22-25 N. = XIV.614.5-9 K.

In *On My Own Books* Galen similarly states that, when a doctor is praised, his competitors in the same art envy him, levelling malicious attacks at him (*Lib. Prop.* 1, 139.17-20 Boudon-Millot = XIX.15.7-9 K.). Yet a dignified life is not mentioned as an explanation for the arousal of envy in medical professionals. In the context of the *Prognosis* Galen's noble character is key to both sparking jealousy and bringing down those who succumb to it, for eventually Antigenes was brought low (κατὰ γῆς ἐδύετο), precisely because of the ruthless vilifications he had uttered against Galen (διὰ τὰς προπετῶς αὐτῷ γενομένης εἰς ἐμὲ βλασφημίας, *Praen.* 3, 84.1-2 N. = XIV.614.16-18 K.). Here we get Galen's response to Antigenes's acrimonious direct speech above, namely a self-statement of moral incorruptibility that outweighs the defamation essayed by Antigenes. As we will see with other enemies of Galen too, throughout *Prognosis* the author depicts them as morally unsound so as to destroy their *probitas morum* ('uprightness of character'), a prime element of the physician's public persona and regarded as a guarantor of medical prowess from Hippocrates onwards. Especially in the Roman period, epigraphic, honorific and legal sources, both in Greek and Latin, show that appraisal of a civic doctor was partly reliant on his ethical excellence,<sup>64</sup> and it is with this contextual parameter

<sup>63</sup> σὺ μὲν οὖν, Ἐπίγενης φίλτατε, τὰς τε μετὰ ταῦτα γενομένης προρρήσεις ἐπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν θεραπείαν οἶδ' ὅτι κηρύττων διετέλεσας, ἐμοὶ δ' ἀρχὴ φθόνου τότε πρῶτον ἐγένετο θαυμαζόμενος ὡς ἐπὶ τε βίου σεμνότητος καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἔργοις.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. Samama (2003: 76-77). See also *Protr.* 5, 89.10-16 B. = I.7.13-8.1 K. On the relationship between professional expertise and moral character in ancient medicine, see Nutton (1985), von Staden (1997a); cf. Boudon-Millot (2009). An informative contemporaneous example (ca. 220 AD) is a fragmentary poem by the Stoic Serapion inscribed on a monument at Athens, which stresses the doctor's moral behaviour. See Oliver and Maas (1939): e.g.: 'He [i.e. the physician] would cure with moral courage and with the proper moral attitude (ἠθροσι).'

in mind that Galen polemicalises against the *ēthos* of his rivals, while defending his own. The Galenic declaration ‘I was admired for the dignity of my life and for my professional successes’ (θαυμαζόμενος ὡς ἐπὶ τε βίου σεμνότητος καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἔργοις, *Praen.* 3, 82.24-25 N. = XIV.614.8-9 K.) makes use of formulaic expressions intertwining *ēthos* (*mores*) and *technē* (*ars*), as evidenced in inscriptions honouring doctors.<sup>65</sup> That also explains why Galen describes his enemies as not corresponding to the persona of the *medicus graciosus* (in Deichgräber’s term),<sup>66</sup> the wise and learned physician that he depicts himself to be.

Character assassination is indeed at the root of Galen’s claim to moral superiority over another medical antagonist, the Erasistratean physician Martianus, who, annoyed by Eudemus’s eulogy of Galen, used to slander the latter by claiming he based his forecasts on divination, not medicine. In this case, the hostility against Galen does not take the form of mockery, as with Antigenes, but is driven by malignity, Martianus’s chief moral passion.<sup>67</sup> The extensive description of this passion occurs in the context of a medical encounter in which Eudemus is the patient. After Galen’s prediction that Eudemus would recover from his quartan fever, Martianus witnessed a new, more intense paroxysm of the patient, and so ‘he went off immediately with a cheerful countenance, displaying obvious pleasure at the failure’ of Galen’s prediction (ἐχωρίσθη παραχρῆμα φαιδρῶ τῷ προσώπῳ φανερώς ἐνδεικνύμενος ἐπιχαίρειν ὡς ἀποτετευγμένης τῆς προρρήσεως, *Praen.* 3, 84.15-17 N. = XIV.615.16-18 K.). I will return to the specifics of the phenomenology of the passion below.

For now it should be noted that the determining aspect in the development of the story is that the patient himself, who appears intellectually demanding<sup>68</sup> and to some extent medically aware, as we have seen,<sup>69</sup> is now presented as putting a lot of confidence in Galen’s prediction (θαρρῶν ὡς οὐ σφαλῆσομένῳ μοι κατὰ τὴν πρόρρησιν, *Praen.* 3, 84.18-19 N. = XIV.616.1-2 K.), despite his initial scepticism as to the outcome

<sup>65</sup> Mattern (1999: 5) and mainly von Staden (1997a). <sup>66</sup> Deichgräber (1970: 70–78).

<sup>67</sup> On Martianus, see Mattern (2013: 129).

<sup>68</sup> E.g. *Praen.* 3, 86.2-8 N. = XIV.616.16-617.5 K., where Eudemus is not satisfied with a brief overview of Galen’s prognosis based on his examination of the pulse, but longs for a detailed account. In *Praen.* 3, 86.29-30 N. = XIV.12-13 K. By the same token, Eudemus is a supporter of the logical demonstration in prognosticating a disease (διαλεκτικῶς . . . συνηλογίσω τὴν εὐρεσιν).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *Praen.* 3, 86.19-24 N. = XIV.617.18-618.6 K., where Eudemus lists a number of natural routes of discharge, such as vomiting, evacuation, urination, sweating etc.

of the latter's prognosis and overall medical role.<sup>70</sup> For that reason, he requires the prognostication of other doctors too in order to balance the debate. Remarkably, the new group of Galenic opponents have the same malevolent characteristics as those displayed by Martianus: they too had cheered up (φαιδροτέροις γεγονόσιν), rejoicing (ἐπιχαίρειν) at the failure of 'Galen's' prognostication (*Praen.* 3, 84.26-27 N. = XIV.616.10-12 K.).

Galen appears conversant with the philosophical specifications of malignant joy, or *Schadenfreude*, and employs them appropriately in his text. For example, his description of the passion accords with Aristotle's similar account in *Rhetoric* 1379b17-18. Here those who experience *Schadenfreude* are said to 'rejoice at misfortunes or simply keep cheerful in the midst of misfortunes' (καὶ τοῖς ἐπιχαίρουσι ταῖς ἀτυχίαις καὶ ὄλως εὐθυμουμένοις ἐν ταῖς αὐτῶν ἀτυχίαις). Galen's *Schadenfreude* especially resembles that of Chrysippus in fragment 401, line 7: 'Malignancy is joy at the evil of one's fellowmen' (Ἐπιχαιρεκακία δὲ ἡδονὴ ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν πέλας ἀτυχήμασιν) and fragment 402, apud Stobaeus *Ecl.* II 91, 20 Wachsmuth: 'Malignancy is joy at another's evil' (ἐπιχαιρεκακία δὲ ἡδονὴ ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοις κακοῖς).<sup>71</sup> The latter is used also in Plutarch's *On Curiosity* 518C, where malignancy together with its counterpart, envy, are thought to spring from a 'savage and bestial affliction, a vicious nature', in line with Alcinous's understanding of the passion in his *Didaskalikos* 32.4 as a 'wild' one.<sup>72</sup> Nonetheless, the closest philosophical intertext to Galen's depiction of malignity is Chrysippus's account of ἐπιχαιρεκακία, as amplified in Plutarch's *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1046B-C:

In one place he says that ἐπιχαιρεκακία does not exist; since no good man ever rejoiced at another's evils . . . But in his Second Book of Good, having declared envy to be 'a sorrow at other men's good on the part of people who desire to disparage their neighbours so that they themselves may excel', he adds the following: 'To this is contiguous the rejoicing at other men's harms, in people who desire to have their neighbours humbled for similar reasons'.

<sup>70</sup> In *Praen.* 3, 86.15-16 N. = XIV.617.13-15 K. Eudemus calls other physicians stupid and eagerly positions himself on Galen's side.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.114.6-10.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Plutarch's *On Curiosity* 518C: 'Since, then, it is the searching out of troubles that the busybody desires, he is possessed by the affliction called "malignancy", brother to envy and spite. For envy is pain at another's good, while malignancy is joy at another's evil; and both spring from a savage and bestial affliction, a vicious nature.' (κακῶν οὖν ἱστορίας ὁ πολυπράγμων ὀρεγόμενος ἐπιχαιρεκακίας συνέχεται πάθει, φθόνου καὶ βασκανίας ἀδελφῶ. φθόνος μὲν γάρ ἐστι λύπη ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοις ἀγαθοῖς, ἐπιχαιρεκακία δ' ἡδονὴ ἐπ' ἄλλοτρίοις κακοῖς· ἀμφοτέρα δ' ἐκ πάθους ἀνημέρου καὶ θηριώδους γεγένηται τῆς κακοηθείας.)

In his own account of this passion, Galen makes subtle use of two important elements from Chrysippus's affective discourse on malignity: a) that this affliction does not affect refined and noble people,<sup>73</sup> suggesting that his attackers have failed to achieve this status. This is consistent with his tendency to present his opponents as an excluded community, and b) that malignant people's motive is to bring others down in order to be seen to excel themselves, which coincides with Galen's discussion of the antagonism among physicians and their power struggle for professional pre-eminence and popular support in securing their elite clients.

This ancient anatomy of *Schadenfreude* can be helpfully informed by the modern understanding of the emotion, especially the idea that the invidious joy the envious person experiences is based on the subjective opinion that the envied party 'deserves' the misfortune.<sup>74</sup> This is certainly the case with Galen's attackers, whose prejudiced perception of Galen's prognostic aptitude, interpreted as sorcery, is what sparks their *Schadenfreude* in the first place, although, of course, their view is vigorously questioned in the text by the Galenic narrator and other characters involved. This has the effect of making readers feel that the accusers' *Schadenfreude* at Galen's lack of success is likely to be 'undeserved', and so they are inclined to sympathise with him in line with the Aristotelian definition of compassion as an emotion aroused for the man who does not deserve his misfortune (*Poetics* 1453a5: ἔλεος μὲν περὶ τὸν ἀνόξιον). The pleasure felt by Galen's rivals can be explained by the fact that the former's failure in prognostication counts as their own direct gain, and this may be better interpreted in terms of the modern psychological research on the emotion whereby '[i]nvidious comparisons seem native to competitive arenas in which people struggle for scarce resources'.<sup>75</sup> Another modern reading of *Schadenfreude* with relevance to its treatment in *Prognosis* is that it has been recognised as a shameful emotion that ought to be suppressed in public.<sup>76</sup> That is surely not a course that Galen's detractors are keen to take. For they mock him openly, exhibiting facial and other signs of their glee. This conduct eventually accentuates their shamelessness and insolence, duly expounded upon in the text.

Another decisive component in this part of the work is the revelation of the philosophical identity or proclivity of Eudemus and Martianus

<sup>73</sup> In *Tusculan Disputations* 3.9 this view is attributed by Cicero to Dionysius of Heraclea.

<sup>74</sup> Smith et al. (1996: 159; 167); Brigham et al. (1997: 375–376). Heider (1958: 287–294) explains this in terms of some kind of injustice felt by the envious person, so that the misfortune of the envied person is taken to be a restoration of justice, the 'equalisation of lot'.

<sup>75</sup> Smith et al. (1996: 159) with further bibliography. <sup>76</sup> Brigham et al. (1997: 365).

respectively, which is verbally signalled in the text and helps explain their behaviour towards Galen. In the concluding section in which his successful treatment comes to an end, Eudemus is for the first time called ‘the philosopher’ and said to have abandoned his usual measured (μετρίως) manner of speaking and to have shouted to everyone present that Galen was thriving despite being scoffed at (*Praen.* 3, 88.2-13 N. = XIV.618.16-619.10 K.). The Peripatetic philosopher’s transgression of philosophical moderation would have been judged harshly in another setting, but not so in this one, where Eudemus’s overexcitement is vindicated by its serving to deliver Galen’s accolade: the implicit moral is that, after the unjust treatment Galen had suffered from, he deserved to be comprehensively defended.

Martianus, on the other hand, represents the other side of the coin, in that he is now specified in the text as being not just a doctor but also a philosopher. This is designed to expose his unphilosophical behaviour. Even though others were delighted by Galen’s effective prognosis, considering him a public benefit to Rome, Martianus, driven by envy, could not bear to congratulate him or even greet him, which breached the basic rules of social etiquette. Not only that, but in an anecdote describing Galen’s encounter with Martianus, we are made aware of the latter’s unrelenting sarcasm with reference to Galen, which the character Eudemus himself labels as ‘ill will’ (*kakonoia*) (*Praen.* 4, 88.14-90.8 N. = XIV.619.11-620.17 K.). The above characterisations of Martianus are consonant with a similar description of him in Galen’s *On My Own Books* (I, 138.1-139.24 Boudon-Millot = XIX.13.7-15.15 K.),<sup>77</sup> where he is called ‘excessively malicious and contentious’ (βάσκανος δὲ καὶ φιλόνηκος ἰκανῶς) to the extent that he got exasperated at the public acceptance of Galen’s works on anatomy. Given the emphasis Galen puts on his own noble character in contrast to that of his rivals, it comes as no surprise that he responds to Martianus’s deprecatory *philoneikia* with his own distinctive *philotimia*, symbolising a positive kind of productive emulation.

### Eudemus as Galen’s spokesman: Authority and moral wickedness

Martianus’s ill will is therefore the starting point for an extensive account put into the mouth of Eudemus, who now acts as Galen’s conduit for his moralising. Although in the medical bedside scenes of *Prognosis* the

<sup>77</sup> Although here he appears as Martialis, probably due to scribal error. On this figure in Galen, see Lloyd (2008: 36).

character Galen never loses his authoritative role as the protagonist of the story, in the moral encounter with Eudemus, he defers to him, letting him take over. Eudemus's moral discourse takes up a good deal more space than any other interlocutor's account on similar issues. And even though it deals with the comparison between the noble moral ambience in Pergamum as opposed to the debasement in Rome, which reflects the geographical distinction between the immoral city and the moral countryside typically found in other Imperial-period works,<sup>78</sup> it ends up delving specifically into the aetiology of the malice afflicting doctors at the heart of the Roman Empire. In that sense, it may well be seen as a vignette with moralising effect, intended for a specifically Roman elite audience, a piece of moral stricture specific to metropolitan identity.<sup>79</sup>

Transformed into an experienced teacher of ethical issues (ἐκ πολλοῦ χρόνου πεπειραμένος, *Praen.* 4, 90.15-16 N. = XIV.621.8-9 K.), Eudemus goes on to amplify his educational account of wickedness. He views the latter not as the result of a sudden regression from good to bad character, but an aggravation of already established vice through the imitation of bad examples under the influence of perverted surroundings.<sup>80</sup> He insists that naturally vicious men in Rome have become even worse because they are trying to amass wealth, which prompts them to copy the vicious morals they see in others.<sup>81</sup> It is therefore clear that in Eudemus's (and Galen's) mind a bad *physis* in association with an equally bad environment brings about moral deterioration, more or less in the same way that Galen believes that a good nature accompanied by an equally good nurture generate moral excellence.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, one reason why Eudemus steps into Galen's shoes to become a didactic model is to back up Galen's views on virtue and vice, enhancing the reliability of his proem in *Prognosis*, particularly in connection with the ethical transgressions of doctors in Rome. It should be noted, however, that whereas the proem was more sociological and less vocal on the philosophical niceties of virtue and vice, through his

<sup>78</sup> E.g. Eudemus's discourse may be seen as a kind of parallel to the discourse of Nigrinus on the ills of living in Rome, as opposed to Athens, in Lucian's *Nigrinus* 12-34. See also Dio of Prusa, *Oration* 7, esp. 38-39, 48-50; cf. Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes* 1-2. See Petit (2018: 43-44) for Galen's description of Pergamum as *locus amoenus*.

<sup>79</sup> Wilkins (2007: 74).

<sup>80</sup> In *Character Traits* 49-50 Kr. association with men who have wicked habits is discouraged by Galen, as this can harm someone's moral state. See also the two fragments from *Character Traits* under no. 16 in Zonta (1995: 49), preserved in Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's *The Epistle of the Dream* and *The Book of Degrees* respectively.

<sup>81</sup> On the connection between luxury and prodigality in Roman moralistic tradition, see Edwards (1993: 176-206).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *De Mor.* 28 Kr.



mouthpiece Eudemus Galen now offers a glimpse of the specifications of moral concepts such as deterioration and imitation (*mimēsis*). Bearing that in mind, stronger emphasis, technical complementarity of ethical concepts as well as variation in the narrative must be other reasons why Galen assigns Eudemus the role of the ethical consultant.<sup>83</sup>

Another interesting aspect in Eudemus's explanation of vice is the connection he makes between knowledge (μόθησις . . . πανουργίας ὀδῶν, *Praen.* 4, 90.18 N. = XIV.621.11-12 K.) or theoretical grasp (τὴν θεωρίαν, *Praen.* 4, 90.26 N. = XIV.622.5 K.) of criminal activity, on the one hand, and acting this out depending on the moral environment in which agents reside, on the other. The idea is that in small, face-to-face towns every single moral deviation is easily noticed by the members of the community, and this prevents people from performing bad deeds, despite being aware of different ways of committing crimes on a theoretical level. Conversely, in Rome the fact that transgressors can easily escape detection due to the overpopulation and the anonymity of the city<sup>84</sup> encourages them to put their knowledge of crime into practice, especially since displays of wickedness are constantly acted out before their very eyes and so imitating them comes easily. The idea of social decency is implicit here, because the determining factor that encourages or prevents agents from committing bad deeds is the reaction of their fellow-citizens to those deeds. In other words, it is not mere knowledge of a vice that determines whether or not an agent will perform it, but rather the communal evaluation of and reaction to vice. This is also supported by the fact that, unlike the citizens of Rome, agents living in small provincial towns are not presented as being seduced by materialistic pursuits, so there is no environmental factor to provoke moral laxity. In Galen's ethical mindset, therefore, morality is determined by a set of social values and the mechanisms the community has in place to administer and protect those values.

<sup>83</sup> Barton (1994: 147) believes that another reason for ascribing the diatribe section to Eudemus is because Galen wants to effectively distance himself from the group of vile physicians whom he attacks in the proem by presenting himself as innocent. This proposition has some rhetorical validity, but it does not take into account the moral strands of Eudemus's account such as deterioration of character, the role of *physis* and *mimēsis* or the social explanation of and response to vice as key elements in Galen's philosophical arsenal developed in the diatribe section. In addition, Barton's suggestion is to a large extent at odds with Galen's overall avoidance of self-effacement in *Prognosis* and certainly not in line with his harsh tone and polemical indignation throughout the text. Cf. Nutton (1972: 59).

<sup>84</sup> Just as in *Recognising the Best Physician*, where the large number of the city's inhabitants is marked out as a 'peculiarity' of Rome, I, 47.6-14 l.

The concluding section of Eudemus's account helps specify the identity of moral transgressors, who up to this point have been unnamed. By comparing them to brigands who attack people that catch them in the act of crimes, and indicating that their area of operation is the city, and their target a group of people of which Galen is also a member, Eudemus identifies these people as the physicians of Rome that Galen had described in his proem. That unanimity between Eudemus and Galen helps explain why Galen the character, in his immediate response to Eudemus, personalises the latter's account by declaring that he wishes to leave Rome so as to get 'all the more quickly rid of the evil of these scoundrels' (ὥστε θᾶπτον ἀπαλλαγῆναι τῆς πανουργίας τῶν μοχθηρῶν τούτων ἀνθρώπων, *Praen.* 4, 92.9-10 N. = XIV.623.1-2 K.). Scholars have debated the veracity of Galen's words about abandoning Rome,<sup>85</sup> but what is important here is the function of this powerful statement in the moral dialogue enacted before us. Given that Eudemus's lengthy account on Roman malice reproduces Galen's own ethical anxieties, it makes sense for Galen the character too (though not the author anymore) to show his indignation over the downtrodden moral topography of the capital, so that his wanting to leave the city reinforces Eudemus's perspective. In a way, this is Galen's individual response to societal and medical vice. Galen's literary device therefore does not necessarily constitute a violation of factuality. For other passages in his work too show that it is a recurring trait in Galen to respond to the immorality of his rivals with a redirection of personal hierarchies.<sup>86</sup>

That Galen's group of rival physicians in Rome overlap with Eudemus's moral transgressors and that the latter also coincide with the physicians Galen attacks in his proem is also shown by Eudemus's reply to Galen. Here Eudemus highlights one of the central concepts developed by Galen in the preface, namely the distortion of truth on the part of abject agents: a) Galen's medical enemies, being liars themselves, believe that Galen is similarly lying (ὥσπερ αὐτοὶ ψεύδονται, πάντες σε νομοιοῦσιν ὁμοίως αὐτοῖς ψεύδεσθαι, *Praen.* 4, 92.12-13 N. = XIV.623.3-5 K.); and b) they think that Galen, just like others coming to Rome, seeks to amass wealth (οὕτω καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους οἶονται παραγεγονότας εἰς αὐτὴν οὐκ ἂν ἐθελῆσαι

<sup>85</sup> E.g. Nutton (1972: 59), Nutton (1979: 181). On the issue of historical criticism in Galen and his accounts (including *Prognosis*), see Scarborough (1981); cf. Hankinson (2008: 19).

<sup>86</sup> E.g. *Lip. Prop.* 1, 139.17-24 Boudon-Millot = XIX.15.8-15 K. Cf. Mattern's assessment of other cases in which literary elaboration does not override factuality: 'it is possible that Galen is recounting something he actually saw but remembering and interpreting it in the light of literary tradition; this tradition may exert a powerful formative influence on some stories', Mattern (2008a: 38). See also Chapter 3 and especially Galen's 'compulsion' technique.

πρὶν ἄθροίσουσιν ἀργύριον ἀπαλλαγῆναι, *Praen.* 4, 92.15.17 N. = XIV.623.8-10 K.); and c) even if Galen's fellow townsmen confirm that Galen is distinguished in terms of his origin and property, other physicians would claim that these are Galen's fabrications to deceive his audience (κατεσκευάσθαι πάντως ὑπὸ σοῦ **φήσουσιν** ἕνεκα τῆς τῶν ἀκουσόντων ἀπάτης, *Praen.* 4, 92.18-19 N. = XIV.623.11-13 K.). Galen phrases Eudemus's reply in such a way as to stress the element of subjective, or indeed faulty, thinking on the part of the medical transgressors (in bold). This reminds readers of the mistaken views of manipulators as described by Galen in the prologue and effectively highlights their moral background, which in both cases (the manipulators and the medical transgressors) is based on ignorance (ἀπαιδεύτων, *Praen.* 4, 92.13 N. = XIV.623.5 K.). This is conclusive evidence that Galen the author is orchestrating the dialogue between Eudemus and Galen the character.

The Galenic narrator recounts in indirect speech some additional details of Eudemus's reply, the most important of which is the poison plot his ignoble opponents devised to ambush skilled physicians. This prompts Galen the character to shift to direct speech and express his gratitude to Eudemus for his warning. As the section below indicates, Galen focuses on the usefulness of Eudemus's moral didacticism:

I am grateful to you, my dear teacher, for telling me all this about their villainy. I shall take good care of myself and, now that I have joined issue with them and uncovered their ignorance, I shall leave this great and populous city for that small town where we all know one another, our parentage, our education, wealth, manners and way of life. Having come to this decision, I do not intend to expose their ignorance and villainy further.<sup>87</sup> *Praen.* 4, 92.26-33 N. = XIV.624.2-11 K.

Some points are worth discussing here. The first relates to issues of authority. By becoming a student of Eudemus in the dialogue, Galen consents to another person with significant philosophical influence taking the lead in passing on the discourse on malice. This way, the account that entails Galen the character being the main victim of villainous doctors seems less biased. Secondly, the concession of authority from Galen to

<sup>87</sup> «χάριν», ἔφη, «γινώσκω σοί, φίλτατε διδάσκαλε, πάντα μοι διηγησαμένω τὰ τῆς πονηρίας αὐτῶν. ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀσφαλῶς ἑμαυτὸν φυλάξω, χωρήσας δ' αὐτοῖς ὁμῶς κατάφωρον τε τὴν ἀμαθίαν αὐτῶν ἐργασάμενος ἀπαλλάξομαι τῆς μεγάλης τῆσδε καὶ πολυσανθρώπου πόλεως εἰς τὴν ὀλιγάνθρωπὸν τε καὶ μικρὰν ἐν ἧ πάντες ἴσμεν ἀλλήλους ἐκ τίνων τε γεγόναμεν ὅπως τε παιδείας ἔχομεν καὶ κτήσεως καὶ τρόπου καὶ βίου. τραπέμενος οὖν ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὴν ἀμαθίαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν πονηρίαν αὐτῶν ἐλέγχειν οὐκ ἐφρόντισα».

Eudemus puts Galen the character in a position to think about his care of the self (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀσφαλῶς ἑμαυτὸν φυλάξω) from the standpoint of a recipient of ethical recommendation. This bespeaks the centrality of psychic wellbeing for moral learners in Galenic ethics. And thirdly, the foundation, or perhaps the accompanying vice, of villainy is ignorance, which can be easily concealed in the anonymity of crowded cities. This lack of acquaintance, communication and social bonding engenders moral relapse, whereas familiarity with one's neighbours allegedly eliminates it. Perhaps the two most vital parameters of familiarity among fellow citizens mentioned above are *tropos* and *bios*, the characterological and ethical features of one's patterned lifestyle, as guarantors of one's disposition in small towns. Such evidence of good character is harder to find in overcrowded cities, which is why, in Galen's opinion, small towns are spaces fostering good morals.

### The discourse on *philoneikia*

It has been argued thus far that the first case histories in *Prognosis*, in conjunction with the text's prelude, build a framework in which structured moral narratives are communicated to readers, either to recommend the moral administration of the medical profession or to reflect broader ethical attitudes and the social factors conditioning them, as seen for example in the discourse on malice. As the text progresses, another ethical discourse, this time on love of strife (*philoneikia*), is advanced, which is again tied up with Galen's medical role. In the Hippocratic *Precepts* 8, contention among doctors is a sign of weakness, and Galen most likely has this in mind in putting forward his views on quarrelsomeness. Two core features of Galen's account on malice recur here as well: first, the presence of an advocate of Galen the character, designed to support his account, especially as regards the moral teachings delivered. In this case, it is Epigenes who takes over, replacing Eudemus. Second, the amplification of a general context of envy (*phthonos*) of Galen, who is increasingly attacked by his medical colleagues as his successes and reputation grow even greater (e.g. *Praen.* 5, 94.12-19 N. = XIV.625.7-17 K.). It is against this backdrop that the digression on strife is recounted by the Galenic narrator.

That this story is key to the overall structure and content of the work is also seen from the fact that, in addressing his recipient Epigenes, 'Galen' – in a metatextual fashion – explains the precise reasons behind its inclusion. On one level, he wants to provide sufficient detail through recollection (*anamnēsis*), so that Epigenes will be able to share the story with an

audience considered ‘worthy of participation’ in this kind of discourse. This reflects the wider philosophical appeal of Galen’s account as well as his ethics of reading (see above). On another level, ‘Galen’ is also interested in giving as brief an account as possible, while preserving the whole sequence of events, considering this incident a representative example of his medical accomplishments and, more interestingly, of his response to the jealousy of doctors and philosophers (*Praen.* 5, 94.24–96.2 N. = XIV.626.5–14 K.). Strikingly enough, ‘Galen’ admits that he has developed an attitude of self-defence when other people threw mud at him (προπηλακιζόμενος, *Praen.* 5, 96.2 N. = XIV.626.14 K.) and that this attitude is something he has learned from Homer (Ὀμήρου με παιδεύσαντος, *Praen.* 5, 96.2 N. = XIV.626.15 K.) through the Iliadic line ‘a man should defend himself, when someone else gets angry with him first’ (ἄνδρ’ ἐπαμύνασθαι ὅτε τις προτέρως χαλεπήνη, *Iliad* 24.369, at *Praen.* 5, 96.4 N. = XIV.626.16 K.). This proverbial line and the message it carries are at the heart of Galen’s exposition of *philoneikia*, and help him unveil the moral failings of people he associates with, just like his attackers accused him on moral grounds when they claimed that he was a diviner, not a true doctor. This is a favourite move by Galen as seen in [Chapter 3](#).

The story the Galenic narrator reports recalls an anatomical gathering in which Galen the character dissected animals to demonstrate how breath and speech worked. The participants in this session vary in terms of their philosophical affiliations (Stoic, Platonic, Aristotelian) and professional identity (physicians, philosophers, orators), but generally two opposing groups may be discerned, one personified by the Roman ex-consul Flavius Boethus (who would become governor of Syria Palestina) and the other by his student Alexander of Damascus (perhaps to be identified with the father of Alexander of Aphrodisias).<sup>88</sup> As we learn from *On My Own Books* and the beginning of *Anatomical Procedures*, Boethus is someone Galen admired, the addressee of some of his medical works and a practitioner of Aristotelian philosophy.<sup>89</sup> This description aligns well with what is said of him in *Prognosis*, viz. that he is a lover of elegance and learning (ἦν φιλόκαλός τε καὶ φιλομαθής, *Praen.* 5, 96.6 N. = XIV.627.1–2 K.), with his moral excellence also well suited to his role as an advocate of Galen, as evinced earlier in the text (e.g. *Praen.* 2, 80.25–82.2 N. = XIV.612.12–17 K.). For, in accordance with the general pattern Galen has established thus

<sup>88</sup> Nutton (2020: 32, 33 n. 22, 124). Cf. Nutton (1984: 318–319), Hankinson (2008: 29, n. 42), Boudon-Millot (2004: 206, n. 18).

<sup>89</sup> Hankinson (2008: 11).

far, his supporters are uniformly cast as ethically superior agents, just like himself.<sup>90</sup> Both Epigenes and Eudemus fit this pattern, and they all form an inclusive community of moral insiders, so that readers, in turn, have good reason to ally with them and look up to them as ethical exemplars.<sup>91</sup> Alexander of Damascus, on the other hand, is portrayed as an outsider, being notorious for his *philoneikia*, a passion which he had displayed on several occasions (*Praen.* 5, 96.25-27 N. = XIV.628.6-8 K.). As one would expect, Alexander soon becomes an adversary of Galen's anatomical performance, but it is also interesting that 'Galen' contrives to defuse Alexander's moral flaw in a beneficial way before it is actually acted out. In order to ensure the smooth running of what is primarily a scientific but by implication also a social act, 'Galen' is being proactive. Instead of excluding Alexander outright, he integrates him into the anatomical demonstration by assigning him the role of the guide (*didaskalos*, *Praen.* 5, 96.21-23 N. = XIV.628.13-15 K.) for all the participants, including Galen the character, and entrusting him with the task of drawing the logical conclusions arising from the dissections. Galen is therefore self-presented as being able to manage specific affections in practical ways, so as to preserve order in contexts in which moral limits are precarious, such as when people of varying dispositions have to interact with one another.

Despite Galen's best efforts, however, Alexander's affection is not contained. His *philoneikia* manifests itself in interrupting Galen before he completes the demonstration and interjecting an epistemological objection that contradicts Galen's views on the reliability of the bodily senses. This provokes Galen the persona to storm off in disappointment (*Praen.* 5, 98.4-8 N. = XIV.628.13-18 K.). Maud Gleason has rightly assessed Galen's 'abrupt departure as a power move in disputation',<sup>92</sup> which is what I would suggest concerning his silence, another authoritative response to patients on other occasions, a sort of 'passive aggression' (e.g. *Praen.* 2, 76.2 N. = XIV.606.18-607.1 K.).<sup>93</sup> Galen opts for self-exclusion

<sup>90</sup> Johnson (2010: 78–80) similarly posits that Boethus in Galen is a cultural and moral paradigm.

<sup>91</sup> The philosopher Glaucón, a supporter of Galen in a case history in *Affected Places*, also has superior moral qualities: he does not hide his thoughts nor is he wicked (μηδὲ κρυψίνους εἶναι, μηδὲ πανούργος, *Loc. Aff.* 5.8, 356.5-6 Brunschön = VIII.362.2-4 K.).

<sup>92</sup> Gleason (2009: 98, n. 69).

<sup>93</sup> In describing the silence of his powerful associate Q. Corellius Rufus, Pliny explicitly considers it a manoeuvre that ensures him extra authority: 'How he helped to build up my reputation in private and in public, and even with the Emperor himself! For when it so happened that the conversation in the presence of the Emperor Nerva turned upon the subject of the promising young men of the day, and several speakers sang my praises, Corellius kept silent for a little while – which gave him a great deal more authority (*quod illi plurimum auctoritatis addebat*) ...', Pliny, *Letters* 4.17.7-8 (transl. mine).

in order to signal his ethical separation from courses of action or behaviour he does not approve of.<sup>94</sup> The same holds true in this case, where his self-contained departure distances him from Alexander's non-remedied contentiousness.

Finally, Galen's withdrawal and his rejection of Alexander's passion aligns him with the other participants, who had initially supported Galen's exhortation to embrace Alexander (*Praen.* 5, 96.23-25 N. = XIV.628.3-6 K.) and who are now similarly disappointed by the latter's bad manners. Their response to the passion was strategically more robust and aggressive than Galen's own, in that they condemned (κατέγνωσαν) and censured Alexander severely (ἐπιτιμῆσαι σφοδρῶς), driven, as the Galenic narrator clarifies, by the fact that they had always been ill-disposed to his quarrelsomeness (ἐχθρῶς ἀεὶ διακείμενοι πρὸς τὴν φιλονεικίαν αὐτοῦ, *Praen.* 5, 98.9-11 N. = XIV.629.1-4 K.). We have here what is known as 'characterisation by reaction' in moralising narratives, namely character assessment focalised through witnesses or marginal characters who function as mouthpieces for the author.<sup>95</sup> In this case, among the assessors involved we find individuals of social preeminence such as Adrian of Tyre (Imperial chair of rhetoric at Athens) and Demetrius of Alexandria (student of the famous orator Favorinus) who are cast as 'prudent' enough to remonstrate with Alexander about his passion (*Praen.* 5, 98.9-16 N. = XIV.629.1-10 K.).<sup>96</sup> Readers have good reason to side with Galen and those socially and ethically elevated figures who took his part.

This anatomical episode finishes with 'Galen' a) having Boethus requesting his *hypommēmata* on the results of his dissection and b) inviting Epigenes to confirm that no one has contradicted the outcome of his demonstration fifteen years later. This suggests that Alexander represents another one of the usual obstacles to Galen's successful career that is destined to fail. Nonetheless, I hope to have shown that the moral implications of Alexander's passion are central to Galen's self-affirmation as medical professional and philosopher, and his suggested management of moral passions in the context of scientific and social relations. The

<sup>94</sup> The same happens in therapeutic contexts: e.g. in the history of a woman with amenorrhoea, Galen disagrees with the treatment proposed by other doctors, and so he abandons the scene in silence and/or despair, e.g. *Ven. Sect. Er. Rom.* 1, 25.2-5 Kotrc = XI.189.2-5 K.; *Ven. Sect. Er. Rom.* 1, 26.1-3 Kotrc = XI.190.1-3 K.; cf. *Ven. Sect. Er. Rom.* 1, 29.4-7 Kotrc = XI.193.4-17 K.

<sup>95</sup> Pelling 1988, Index, s.v. 'characterisation by reaction'.

<sup>96</sup> Nutton (2020: 32). The group includes three more prominent intellectuals (*philologoi*), namely Claudius Severus (who later married Annia Faustina, Marcus Aurelius's daughter), Sergius Paulus and Vettulenus Barbarus (uncle of the emperor Lucius Verus), on whom see Nutton (1979: 63-67) and Nutton (2020: 33).

antagonism and polemics in this medical encounter, just as elsewhere, are not just fashionable rhetorical means for highlighting Galen's medical proficiency. They are significant mechanisms of moral intent and effect, which Galen exploits to provide ethical advice and negotiate key moral concepts or concerns.

The same can be said, to some extent, about the case history of Sextus,<sup>97</sup> whose *philoneikia* again plays a prominent role in the story, albeit this time in a purely therapeutic setting. For unlike Alexander of Damascus, Sextus is now Galen's patient, whose extreme contentiousness (φιλόνηκος ὠν ἐσχάτως ὁ Ἐξστος, *Praen.* 10, 120.29 N. = XIV.652.15 K.) is explained in terms of his being so obstinately determined to prove Galen's prediction wrong that he refused to admit to have experienced a relapse. This leads him to disobey Galen's therapeutic advice and to arrogantly boast of having 'defeated' Galen's prediction (ἐκαυχῆσατο κατ' αὐτὴν νενικηκέναι μου τὴν πρόρρησιν, *Praen.* 10, 122.4-5 N. = XIV.653.2-3 K.). Here Galen does not take any measures to combat Sextus's moral shortcomings, as he did with Alexander, because the medical encounter, unlike the social or anatomical one we have seen above, had more pressing consequences, since the disobedient patient eventually had to come to his senses as his disease worsened. Still, the Galenic narrator capitalises on the ethically related opportunities that the patient's obstinacy presents to divulge a more generalised view of the situation. He thus extracts the axiom that 'what a man wants, he always thinks will happen' (*Praen.* 10, 122.24-25 N. = XIV.654.7-8 K.), which summarises Galen's (negative) evaluation of Sextus's hasty compromise and especially the way he readily believed in the imminent abatement of his illness. The quasi-proverbial saying cited above is meant to question contentiousness as a moral pathway in medical praxis and suggestively dissuade readers from embracing it as a broader social attitude.<sup>98</sup> Obstnacy is pernicious both for the body and the soul.

The same Galenic technique is in evidence in a case history of a young man suffering from fever in the *Therapeutic Method*, 11.3, X.671.6-678.18 K. As with Sextus above, the youth jeopardised his physical health due to his contentious nature, but interestingly the Galenic narrator informs us that the same *philoneikia* afflicted the group of doctors tending the sick, who were also ignorant and stupid, since they provided the patient with

<sup>97</sup> Birley (1972) argues that Sextus is a nickname for Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius. Nutton (1973) disagrees with this identification.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *MM*, 11.3, X.678.11-18 K.



erroneous cures. So, in a way, this passage combines the *philoneikia* of the patient and of the medical peers as obstacles to Galen's therapeutic role. The story is rounded off with a moral lesson arising from the patient's character flaw, which is also related to Galen's didactic role: 'This patient taught many of those who were only half bad and not complete asses (οὗτος ὁ ἄρρωστος ἐπαίδευσε πολλοὺς τῶν ἡμιμοχθῆρων τε καὶ μὴ παντάπασιν ὄνων) that it is sometimes necessary to nourish before the paroxysm . . . And I taught you (ἐδίδαξα δέ σε) that such people need to be nourished at the actual onset of the first paroxysm . . .' (*MM* 11.3, 678.11-18 K.). In Galen's mind, medical education is not unaffected by moral behaviour and the management of character, whether of the patient or the medical professionals.

The sociological theory of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann helps make sense of the function of *philoneikia* (alongside its associated negative *eris*) and *kakoëtheia* in the medical narratives of *Prognosis*. Contending that individuals or social groups work together to construct objects ('artefacts') that have a shared meaning for them, the two theorists have argued that knowledge is the prime example of such a constructed object.<sup>99</sup> I hope to have shown that morality and moral knowledge form another such artefact in *Prognosis*, functioning as a culturally constructed 'habitus' for medical practice. The above passions valorise truth and ethical propriety for Galen (the author, character and narrator) and his intratextual allies, who together form a social network that favours a virtuous type of medicine, unlike Galen's opponents who do not respond philosophically during the various operations and enactments of medicine. The most illuminating instantiation of (self-)displayed morality as habitus for medicine in the text is perhaps the praise directed by the emperor Marcus Aurelius at Galen the persona towards the end of the work. Here the ideal physician (embodied in Galen) is endowed with moral liberty (ἐλεύθερον), since he rises above other medical professionals or patients who are avaricious, quarrelsome, proud, jealous and spiteful (οὐ μόνον φιλοχρημάτων ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλονείκων καὶ φιλοδόξων καὶ φθονερῶν καὶ κακοθήων, *Praen.* 11, 128.25-30 N. = XIV.660.9-14 K.). Liberty is indeed a major trait of the morality of medicine, for elsewhere Galen considers it endemic to truth (*Plen.* 2, 32.4-5 Otte = VII.522.1-2 K.) and to imperturbability from affections (*Aff. Pecc. Dig.* 3, 6.26-7.1 DB = V.7.10-11 K.). Interestingly, the salience of liberty in Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* aligns with its treatment in Galen, in that it describes both disdain for deceit and freedom from

<sup>99</sup> Berger and Luckmann (1967).

passions as part of the moral make-up of the Stoic sage (*Med.* 4.49, 5.5; 6.16, 8.48 respectively).

### Conclusion

What is the main aim behind the composition of *Prognosis*, then, and how does ethics fit in with this aim, according to the analysis of this Chapter? Previous studies have stressed the apologetic intention of the work, associating it with Galen's attempts to protect his reputation against attackers who accused him of being a *logiatros*, a physician only in words, prioritising book learning over practical know-how.<sup>100</sup> Self-characterisation is therefore a vital means to that end, which has led Nutton to also emphasise that Galen's superiority in virtue, as presented in *Prognosis*, was a fit way to enhance his value as a doctor in line with the Hippocratic *Prognostic*, especially at a moment when his position at the Imperial court was precarious.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, the sophisticated moral discourse that permeates the text has other implications too, as I have shown:

1. The focused discussions on excellence and vice, although expounded in the context of professional self-advertisement, become an integral part of Galen's contribution to contemporary moral philosophy. We have seen that there is a strong theoretical connection between this ostensibly medical tract and the discussion of moral errors, as negotiated by Galen in his ethical works. Although the latter postdate *Prognosis* by more than fourteen years,<sup>102</sup> the common notions and elements they share point to what we could call Galen's mental geography, a reservoir of ideas inhabiting his mind and employed as and when appropriate, irrespective of the precise chronology of the

<sup>100</sup> Often translated as 'word-doctor', 'theoretical doctor' or 'book doctor'. See also *Lib. Prop.*, I, 139.17–20 Boudon-Millot = XIX.15.7–9 K. Nutton (1972: 62) defines *logiatros* as 'a companion suitable for medical debate and philosophical discussion but remote from the daily practical duties of a doctor'. See also Hankinson (2008: 14).

<sup>101</sup> Nutton (1972: 61). Nutton (1972: 62) also claims that with *Prognosis* Galen attempted to persuade the emperor to keep him as his personal physician after 176 AD, and that the text was therefore an 'ephemeral tract [which] succeeded in keeping Galen among the court physicians . . . evident from his continued service to the emperors until Septimius Severus . . .'. See also Nutton (1972: 58): 'Thus the appearance of a discussion of vice and virtue in a tract ostensibly devoted to medicine is not so strange when Galen's professional interests are considered. The author of such moral sermons as "On the avoidance of grief" and "How to profit from your enemies" would be unlikely to miss an opportunity of preaching his message and denouncing the evils of those who believed otherwise.'

<sup>102</sup> *Prognosis* was composed in 178 AD, whereas the surviving moral works date to after 192 AD. On the dating of *Prognosis*, see Nutton (1979: 49–51) and Peterson (1977: 485–488).

works concerned.<sup>103</sup> For example, Galen's suggestions on embracing truth and avoiding materialism or contention in *Prognosis* all feature in his deontological advice in *The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher*, in which a physician can measure up to Hippocrates only when exhibiting these three virtues in combination.<sup>104</sup> This is an indication that ethics is a systematised, structured unit of Galen's production, amplified not only in self-independent treatises on moral philosophy, but also spread throughout other works of a different character. Ethics infiltrates particularly the mechanisms that underlay medical forethought as a key theme of Galen's thought and work. Consequently, even though Susan Mattern has recognised three ways of demonstrating superiority in prognosticating settings, namely 'the physical act of curing the patient, the mainly intellectual process of identifying the patient's problem and predicting the course of the disease . . . , and the mainly verbal activity of sophistic debate and persuasion',<sup>105</sup> the moralising agenda running through *Prognosis* is also contrived to assert our physician's pre-eminence. We have also noted that ethics is used as an analogy for better elucidating the malfunction of medicine. Galen seems to be tapping into the illustrative capacity of ethics in other areas too, for example linguistics, where the philosophical baggage of virtue and vice, means and end, are employed to make more meaningful the correct use of language (*Soph.* 2, 82.5-22 Schiaparelli = XIV.586.2-587.1 K.; *Subf. Emp.* 7, 63.10-15 Deichgräber).<sup>106</sup>

2. The moral capital of *Prognosis* symbolises Galen's focused didacticism mainly through the medium of the case history. *Affected Places* or *Therapeutic Method* are other Galenic collections saturated with clinical stories, but any references to flaws of character

<sup>103</sup> In other words, Galen has an entrenched ideology, which he cannot radically change as time passes. On this general feature in the Imperial period, see e.g. Xenophontos (2013: 127). Nutton (2020: 2) endorses this point with regard to Galen by saying that 'there is no doubt that he retained the same major interests throughout his life and could return to the same theme after a quarter of a century with little more than stylistic differences, as in the two parts of the *Method of Healing*'.

<sup>104</sup> *Opt. Med.* 285.12-18 Boudon-Millot = I.54.12-55.1 K. (contention among physicians in the context of prognosis); *Opt. Med.* 288.3-11 Boudon-Millot = I.57.9-16 K. (the good doctor should despise money); *Opt. Med.* 290.5-7 Boudon-Millot = I.59.13-15 K. (the true doctor should be a companion of truth).

<sup>105</sup> Mattern (2008a: 76).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 5.2-3, 101.10-12 Boudon-Millot = XIX.60.18-3 K., *PHP* 2.2, 104.18-20 DL = V.214.8-11 K. Ethical terms are also used by Galen to elucidate appropriateness in the production of exegesis (e.g. *Hipp. Prorrh.* II 1, 52.1-7 Diels = XVI.588.18-589.9 K.) or the publication of books in general (e.g. *Adv. Jul.* 1, 32.5-18 Wenkebach = XVIII.246.1-247.11 K.).

(quarrelsomeness, anxiety, irascibility, unwillingness to obey, trickery) or imperfections of lifestyle (love of luxury, laziness, gluttony) do not carry any special moral weight in the medical snippets, which are restricted to illuminating the patient's constitution and temperament for diagnostic, nosological or therapeutic purposes.<sup>107</sup> Nor does Galen expound such moral failings to explore and disseminate his practical ethics, as he does in *Prognosis*. Unlike the impersonal Hippocratic reports, the case histories in Galen are recounted by the Galenic narrator, who, as we have seen, plays a vital role in the elucidation of ethics, showing that corporeal therapy is to a large extent bound up with morals.

Comparison with other (near-)contemporary authors is also instructive. Simon Swain has demonstrated that, in some of his cases involving melancholy, Rufus of Ephesus (two generations before Galen) reforms his patients' social eating habits through dietetic instruction that adjusts their moral behaviour. For example, by urging them against overeating, Rufus's 'contemporaries would have read' the text 'from a moral perspective', for instance by abhorring self-indulgence.<sup>108</sup> Parallels from Plutarch's *Precepts of Health Care* and even Galen's own *Matters of Health* are adduced to substantiate Swain's claims about the social pressures the Imperial elite confronted and which often threatened their physical and mental wellbeing. Yet the moral inferences in Rufus's case histories have none of the moral niceties found in the histories in Galen's *Prognosis*, where medicine overlaps with virtue itself, as we have observed.

Indeed, by being an advocate of suggested ethical prescription and at the same time dramatising dissenting moral approaches through personae such as Alexander of Damascus, Martianus or Sextus, Galen captures the full range of Foucault's definition of morality, as explained in the second volume of his *History of Sexuality*:

By 'morality', one means a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies ... we can call this prescriptive ensemble a 'moral code'. But

<sup>107</sup> *MM* 5.10, X.353.3-4 K. (shamelessness coupled with obtuseness); *MM* 8.2, X.538.1-2 K. (patient whose character tended to anger and anxiety); cf. *MM* 10.3, X.671.15-18 K. (thoughtful and industrious patient who enjoyed physical exercises; he once experienced distress and exerted himself); *MM* 8.6, X.581.12-14 K. (overeating and overdrinking); *MMG* 1.9, XI. 28.12-16 K. (overindulgence); *Praes. Puls.* 1.1, IX. 218.8-220.5 K. (love of luxury); *Comp. Med. Gen.* 3.8, XIII.636.1-638.7 K. (wealthy patient who enjoys luxurious and over-expensive medicaments); *Loc. Aff.* 2.10, 378.21-22 Gärtner = VIII.132.10-11 K. (heavy drinking).

<sup>108</sup> Swain (2008: 126-138); quotation from p. 136.

'morality' also refers to the real behaviour of individuals in relation to the rules and values that are recommended to them: the word thus designates the manner in which they comply more or less fully with a standard of conduct, the manner in which they obey or resist an interdiction or a prescription; the manner in which they respect or disregard a set of values.<sup>109</sup>

3. In turn, moral prescription and real-time behavioural response to that prescription offers useful insights into the anticipated role of Galen's implied or ideal audience. In reading *Prognosis* readers are expected to critically absorb the moral principles proposed in the text as part of their consolidated philosophical education. When it comes to Galen's ethical enterprise in *Prognosis*, it is remarkable that even though there is some direct protreptic moralism, as a general rule the author does not provide ready-made solutions, being keener to problematise moral notions, thereby prompting readers to explore them in ways that would help them hone their philosophical skills, especially independent thinking. For instance, when encountering the contentiousness of Alexander of Damascus in the context of an imagined social gathering, readers are led to morally distance themselves from it through the manoeuvres Galen employs, as explained above, e.g. disdain of negative exemplars. At the same time the philosophical messages or overtones of the passion, whether hinted at or clearly elaborated in the narrative, stimulate the readers' capacity for decoding and assessing the situation for future purposes, thus helping them adopt an appropriate moral stance in their own life while anticipating its implementation in the lives of others around them as well. The same is true of the theoretical discussion of moral errors that underlies the preface of *Prognosis*, which also supports the ordering and application of an advocated morality within Galen's society. In that sense, the various moral texts or subtexts in *Prognosis*, despite differences in topic, style or mode of exposition, are in fact united by what Jason König has called with reference to Imperial-period miscellanies an 'underlying ideological coherence', a seemingly diverse set of material which is unified 'through being imbued with distinctive ways of viewing the world'. One such view 'reveal[s] the unseen effects of particular ethical priorities', which completely resonates with the coherent moralising vision that Galen advances in this work.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Foucault (1990a: 25).

<sup>110</sup> König (2007: 44).

## Conclusion

The Byzantine author of the pseudo-Lucianic dialogue *Timarion*, a work dated to the twelfth century, offers an arresting prosopography of Galen centred around the characteristics of his personality that seem to have endured over time. As one might expect, his formidable prowess in medicine predominates, but other aspects that single him out from the medical conclave described in the dialogue surface too, notably his thoroughness and ambition that keep him so focused and show a transcendent devotion to his endeavours.<sup>1</sup> Popular philosophy has been one of the least known of Galen's passionate endeavours, and one which this book has attempted to illuminate from a number of angles.

This study has explored Galen's vested interest in practical ethics, which is both intrageneric, that is developed in the context of ethical tracts, and extrageneric, percolating through his other writings as elementary particles of his moral thought. With the various pieces of Galen's jigsaw puzzle of ethics now assembled, what emerges is a dynamic portrayal of his ethical mindset and his programme of moral transformation. This translates into a fully formed, coherent set of ideas on moral praxis and evolution in the first centuries of the common era. Motivated by his core belief that agents are responsible for shaping their own lives, acting beyond the bounds of ineluctable factors affecting their character and emotional trajectory, Galen addresses them as thinking entities, in ways that help them draw on and develop their ability to discriminate and form correct judgments as they proceed towards moral maturity. This core belief is revealed on a discursive level by means of the didactic and intimate relationship that Galen establishes between himself as moral authority and his audience as the party to be guided and cared for. That is a major feature of his practical ethics, as analysed in this book.

<sup>1</sup> *Timarion*, ch. 29, 75.715-724 Romano.

In a world in which moral flaws would have been an ever-present danger in all facets of everyday experience, Galen provides a broad array of ethical tactics to lead people towards integrity, happiness and success. These are moralising strategies of some sophistication that shield the inner condition, as we have seen. For example, he frequently uses moral anecdotes and quotations that are deftly embedded in the narrative to make as forceful an impact on the reader as possible. He also deploys paired illustrations of people who know how to live and people who do not in order to stimulate moral reflection and inform decision-making. He also uses the concepts of the emulation of ideal paradigms, and of the salience of intellectual attainment (*paideia*), supervening states and surroundings, and philosophical practice to promote morally upright and, most importantly, socially functional patterns of righteous living.

Issues of self-definition and self-projection are key to the effectiveness of the author's exhortative advice and have a credentialling function too, enhancing his professional legitimacy in the discipline of popular philosophy. We have noted that, in formulating his moralising methodology, Galen claims to have rivalled both earlier works belonging to the tradition of the treatment of emotions and present-day ones by means of self-effacement or harsh polemics. At other times he sets about revising even his most cherished predecessors. The manner in which he employs allegories and imagery from Plato in particular is not that of a ruminative thinker, but a prime example of resourceful emulation of the past in the area of ethics.

Some ethical subjects that attract Galen's attention are common to the legacy of popular philosophy he inherited, yet there are some others which are either specific to him, or, albeit familiar from other thinkers, reinvigorated by individualised approaches in his work. The autobiographical dimension of the ethical narratives is one of the elements specific to Galen's ethics, since our author tends to place great stress on his personal experience to persuade his readers as he attempts to monitor or modify their behaviour. Through autobiography he also succeeds in foregrounding his moral influence in a way that carries the reader with him, in essence rendering himself a paragon, something his audience could aspire to become.

On the other hand, in tune with the chief aim of the practical ethical tradition of being truly pragmatic, Galen's philosophical advice in his work is never utopic, theoretical or bookish, but always offers realistic responses to the idiosyncrasies of contemporary, upper-class life. This is manifested in the way Galen plays on the social credentials of his noble audience,

especially by encouraging them to ponder their love of money, passion for self-esteem, and generally the degree to which their aspirations might be turned into a high-stakes game for the sake of their social decency or professional distinction. Nevertheless, to some extent Galen gives this familiar element a makeover through the single-minded adaptability and situatedness with which he invests his moral ideas on human relationships. Far from issuing rigid commands, unrelated to the moral learner's immediate background and circumstances, Galen constructs a bespoke form of ethics for the different public activities and events the learner would have engaged in on a regular basis, and that is adapted to the nexus of routine problems they were likely to be caught up in. At the same time, he is conscious of the fact that the recipients of his ethics are inherently contextualised agents, people who must benefit from philosophy while remaining in their social environment and becoming successful in it, not as a result of isolating themselves from it. He knows very well, for instance, that drinking is an indispensable hallmark of interaction among educated adults, a social skill his Roman readers in particular would have acquired in adolescence in their peer group of *iuvenes*. Hence, in alerting his readers to the threat of drunkenness, Galen does not propose dispensing with the symposium, but gives advice on how to participate in it constructively, by exercising self-restraint, modesty and self-examination. Likewise, political activity was a marker of high culture that happened to involve significant moral trials. Therefore, Galen is sanguine that adjustment, not complete withdrawal, will form the basis of a workable solution here. By the same token, when it comes to social intercourse, he is not after seclusion, which would have been inconceivable for the elites he has in mind, who were key social players. He rather provides them with useful tips on how to acquaint themselves with the affectation and duplicity they were likely to be exposed to, so as to enable them to deal in the best possible way with the demands and anxieties of social bonding. In the context of the anatomical demonstration, another noteworthy cultural practice for a large part of Galen's audience, where competition figured especially prominently, the author does not argue that harmony should be achieved by excluding contentious medics, but rather that there were effective ways of pre-empting their argumentativeness by assigning them, for example, some role in the process, as in the case of Alexander of Damascus in *Prognosis*. In opting for co-existence and good fellowship rather than isolation and self-love, Galen is closer to Plutarch and a far cry from Seneca, Musonius Rufus or Epictetus, who, in keeping with their Stoic ideology, asserted that one's position and perception in society ought to be a matter of indifference to



the agent, hence occasionally suggesting even exclusion from social activities.

Galen's most pivotal contribution by far to ancient philosophical culture on ethics, however, is his creative combination of medicine and practical ethics, a powerful interdisciplinarity. This works on three levels. Firstly, Galen offers a thoughtful proposal for the administration of habits and social practices affecting the health of the body, which is more robust and more methodical than anything we find in other medical authors. This proposal complements the perspective of other Imperial-age moralists on the same issues by adding the standpoint of a doctor preoccupied with moral concerns. Secondly, Galen conceptualises a morally adjusted medical science – what has been called 'moral medicine' in this study – which serves humanity at large, abolishing self-interestedness and other toxic passions detrimental to human affairs. It thus operates beyond the strict limits of the professional ethics of other medical writers and introduces a substantial amount of material contemporary moralists would be interested in but did not tackle as such. Thirdly, through powerful moral commentaries attesting to the social and civic value of 'moral medicine' in his Imperial-period community, Galen develops a detailed sociology of his philosophical medicine, with which he replaces the banal, over-condensed, no-frills analogy of 'philosophy as medicine' encountered in other moralists. Remarkably, this analogy does not feature in Galen's work though it is found extensively in the work of other philosophers, which might suggest that Galen anticipated his sociology of moral medicine would be his major contribution to Imperial *moralia*.

The more specific findings of the research into Galen's medicine and practical ethics will not be rehearsed here, as they are detailed in the conclusions of the individual Chapters and in the summaries in the 'Overview of Chapters' section of the Introduction. So in the remainder of this Conclusion I would like to restrict my observations to some of the contextual implications of this study.

My 2016 monograph on moral education in Plutarch ended with an aspiration: that the Second Sophistic would one day be seen, in the light of practical ethical works and contrary to its traditional understanding as an age in which mastery of classical philosophy offered educated individuals increased chances of public elevation, from a different viewpoint, as a discourse for debating and fostering personal and social morality.<sup>2</sup> The present book on Galenic ethics confirms my commitment to this very idea,

<sup>2</sup> Xenophontos (2016a: 203).

namely that Imperial popular philosophy needs to be evaluated on its own terms, that is for its own *edifying* impact and intent, in tandem with its rhetorical, sophistic or even doctrinal functions, and persuasive and emotive results.

This book has attempted to make a significant contribution to the study of Galen's production of practical ethics by approaching it as a social construct, 'a shared cultural resource with which different members of society engage actively in different ways', to use a relevant formulation reflecting the social dynamics of *exempla* in ancient Rome.<sup>3</sup> In my reading, Galen's practical ethics, both in the form of independent works and when scattered throughout the corpus, offers a narrative model of a thought-world and a template for emotional resilience designed for contemporary readers. This is not to say that the sophistic thematology of Galen's ethics is not important – for Galen frequently talks about professional sophists, figuratively presents doctors as sophists in the Platonising sense and abhors sophistic tendencies, as we have seen; it's just that all these themes do not readily disclose an agonistic intent on the author's part, but rather heighten his moral emphases, situating them at the forefront of ethical structures and cultural norms under the Empire so as to make them resonate with readers.

Indeed, the way Galen's practical ethics is firmly enmeshed in social practice is perhaps the most significant underlying feature of his moral attitudes, as evinced throughout this book. The social implementation of moral instruction is made part of almost every discussion involving ethics in his work; and the moral garb in which he dresses up his powerful vision of medicine is equally entwined with a pragmatic appeal to social beings, members of organised society. The ethical values that Galen's moralising enacts are not abstract ideas to the author and his readers, but instantiations of incidents they would have been intimately familiar with from their own moral experience or that of others around them. That might explain the absence in Galen of an ethics for self-isolating philosophers, those who had opted for the contemplative life (*theōrētikos bios*), which was conventionally considered to correspond to inactivity and idleness.

Galen's commitment to medicine as a site for moral edification is also immensely practical. This concept in Galen, his 'moral medicine', is highly innovative with no parallel of the same kind and degree in the ancient world. As demonstrated in the various Chapters, Galen's moral medicine is largely predicated on the use of polarised categories, either in the form of

<sup>3</sup> Langlands (2018: 4).

contrasting patterns of behaviour or of divergent ethical assessments (often praise vs blame) of two radically different figures or groups. This syncritic technique forms an overarching strategy of moralising in Galen, as seen above, which perhaps culminates in his (disturbingly) unrelenting moral estrangement from others.

Unlike more conventional scholarly approaches which have judged Galen's tendency to distinguish himself from other physicians mainly as a means of competition and self-promotion, this book has drawn attention to the ethical dimension of such competitiveness, emphasising the moral lessons it carries and the range of moral analyses it is likely to evoke in Galen's audience. On that premise, Galen's moral position towards his medical and philosophical peers may be best understood in the light of positioning theory. This is a new paradigm in modern 'folk' psychology (a field-based cultural science as opposed to the laboratory-based variety), which explores human behaviour in relation to social reality, where common interpretations of the world are shared among members of a given community. These shared beliefs or 'local moral orders' are known as 'positions', affecting people's relations with one another in accordance with their anticipated rights and duties in society. One type of positioning is 'moral positioning', when one behaves in a manner consistent with the rights, duties and obligations of one's role.<sup>4</sup> It is on this kind of positioning that Galen bases his role as a physician and philosopher, portraying himself throughout his texts as acting and responding according to a recommended form of conduct that is consistently attuned to his place in society and science. He is a lover of truth, he works ceaselessly from dawn to dusk, opts for robust scientific and philosophical methods, offers his medical services even late at night when busy or physically exhausted and even takes on a new task, as we have observed, in catering for the moral health of his fellow men through a philanthropic spirit of empathy for the shortcomings of human morals. In other words, he positions himself as an active moralist in the service of his society, not an armchair philosopher.

By contrast, when Galen delineates his medical or philosophical peers, what we most often see is 'indirect positioning', which portrays a group of individuals favourably or unfavourably so as to serve the interests of the person who makes the positioning.<sup>5</sup> By minimising their mental attributes (e.g. calling them stupid, ignorant), their character traits (e.g. with words like 'presumptuous', 'envious') and their moral qualities (e.g. declaring them ignoble or sneaky), Galen undermines the perception of other

<sup>4</sup> Harré and Moghaddam (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Harré and Moghaddam (2003: 6).

professionals' fitness to perform their assigned duties and therefore attempts to deny them access to their social rights. This move surely consolidates his own standing in medicine and philosophy, but at the same time it exposes moral pitfalls and signals to readers how much standards have slipped with a view to stimulating their critical reactions to the degeneracy of the contemporary world.

Social psychologists who are proponents of positioning theory have stressed that 'indirect positioning' often occurs in larger scale discourses, for example at the level of a nation or culture, where the indirect positioning of a leader has a bearing on the positioning of the larger community itself. By presenting himself as a moral leader of his society and of humanity at large, a champion of Graeco-Roman morals devoted to the public service, Galen reserves for himself the 'high moral ground'<sup>6</sup>, and with his moral uprightness on all fronts he provides a fully-fledged model of morality, which his fellow men were expected to look up to and eventually embrace, thereby restoring socio-political order.

In the same vein, the many slanders that Galen's rivals level against him, according to his own narration, may be seen as 'malignant or malevolent positioning',<sup>7</sup> a guileful way to ensure Galen is seen in a deficit perspective and is deprived of his right to esteem – a shameful condition for any polite, literate male in the Roman Empire. Dominant values of the time would have deprecated such immoral practices, and hence Galen's readers are easily made to side with Galen's righteousness, deploring the crooked manners of his enemies, so that the slander against Galen eventually becomes morally didactic for readers. I hope that the different uses of ethics in Galen's work have become clearer through the filter of positioning theory.

It only remains to tackle the question: Why ethics? Where was Galen thinking ethics would get him when he decided to compose his group of ethical works and when he embroidered the rest of his oeuvre with ethical episodes and inflections? For one thing, this study has emphasised that practical ethics is, to Galen's mind, a companion to his medicine, with practical ethics sometimes informing medicine (Chapter 2: e.g. the moral associations of health-related contexts) and at other times being informed by it (Chapter 4 or 5: e.g. the correspondences between moral and medical therapy, or Chapter 8: the interconnection between *Prognosis* and Book 2 on *Errors*), albeit the direction of influence is occasionally fuzzy. Secondly, moral medicine looks more dignified and intellectualised than

<sup>6</sup> Harré and Moghaddam (2003: 6).    <sup>7</sup> Harré and Moghaddam (2003: 7–8).

medicine devoid of any ethical and social elements, and so Galen may have aimed to reach a wider audience with at least some of his works. The philosophising observations he inserts would have made these texts more attractive to philosophers and other experts in matters philosophical. For example, the *Therapeutics to Glaucón*, *Matters of Health* or *Therapeutic Method* is not the kind of reading targeted only at doctors, but is ripe with potential for attracting a wider readership of *pepaideumenoí*, particularly lovers of medicine (*philiatroí*) or other cultivated enthusiasts.<sup>8</sup>

That said, a sincere and serious concern for contemporary morals should not be underestimated as another explanation for Galen's moral medicine. This does not mean simply reproducing platitudes of medical ethics, familiar from Hippocratic deontological tracts, e.g. that the doctor should not be money-grubbing and the like. Rather, the moral component of medicine ensures its philosophical regulation and social applicability, as I have argued above, especially in view of Galen's evident realisation that contemporary society was falling apart and that moral aberrancy abounded. The literature of Galen's time emphasises this crisis and offers cumulative evidence for the prioritising of the soul's wellbeing over that of the body. Dio of Prusa is adamant that it is not 'worse for a man to suffer from an enlarged spleen or a decayed tooth than from a soul that is foolish, ignorant, cowardly, rash, pleasure-loving, illiberal, irascible, unkind, and wicked, in fact utterly corrupt' (*Oration* 8.7-8). With his main occupation being that of a doctor, Galen may have felt the need to respond to such intellectual arguments over the tension between medicine and philosophy. And so what he proposes is not sidestepping moral philosophy, in line with pseudo-Quintilian's *The Lesser Declamations* 268, discussed in the Introduction. Rather he advocates integrating it with his medicine, in an attempt to produce a stronger, more socially dynamic variety of medicine.

Last but not least, as is obvious from the depth and breadth of his scholarly interests and his inquisitive personality, Galen embodies the ideal of the *pepaideumenos* in his day, so that embarking upon a new area of study and writing would have been a natural step for him to take. That may have been his own decision, or he may well have been motivated by his stellar friends, at the behest of whom he so often admits to having produced specialised works (remember the addressee of *Affections and Errors of the Soul*). A central argument of this book has been Galen's probable dependence on Plutarch. The latter enjoyed a widespread reputation in scholarly circles in Rome and elsewhere from immediately after

<sup>8</sup> On this group, see Luchner (2004: esp. 14–21).

his death at the beginning of the second century AD onwards, so that by the time Galen composed his strictly ethical works towards the end of the same century Plutarch would have already been a celebrity in ethics. Given Galen's high-flying ambitions in this area, it is not unreasonable to assume that he may have been inspired by Plutarch to become an active partaker in this living tradition.

How successful was he? This is a thorny question and its answer depends on how one defines success. If it connotes subsequent reception, then he was not very successful, since Galen's ethics did not exert much influence, other than in some Arabic and Hebrew emulations in the medieval period (next to nothing compared with his imposing medical reception across geographies and cultures).<sup>9</sup> If success is defined in terms of comparison with other contemporary philosophical trends, then it is important to avoid any reductionist approaches that interpret Galen's ethical or ethically informed works based purely on their factual, conceptual or linguistic content. In particular Galen's essays on moral issues are, as we have seen, refined pieces of literature, reflective of and hence tailored to their social realities. Their primary aim is to convince readers to adopt suitable moral outlooks, regardless of whether that might sometimes run counter to the author's doctrinal preferences. We have seen throughout the book that Galen advances various reconfigurings or retexturings to suit his moral theses; for example, he seems on occasion to be suggesting the eradication of emotions or abrogating political participation, but this he does to make a moral point and not because he believed those attitudes to be philosophically sound. In addition to these tactics, we could also cite Galen's delicate linguistic modifications whereby certain concepts that are generally considered negative might take on positive meanings, or vice versa, in particular Galenic contexts to buttress ethical types of behaviour, especially those embodied by Galen.

Therefore, the scholarly view that Galen's ethics do not conform to the standards of the philosophical language of other near-contemporary theorists<sup>10</sup> is not consistent with the innovations of his ethical discourse. Nor should this view blind us to the multiplicity of moral works circulating in this period, a period that valued personal interpretation of ideas and transgression over straitjacketing uniformity and adherence to doctrinal

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Nutton (2008: 356–357); cf. Levey (1967), Hajal (1983), Strohmeier (2003), Adamson (2016). Galen's moral corpus influenced leading medical professionals writing in Arabic, who also chose to interweave medicine and ethics. Key sources include, for example, al-Rāzī's *Spiritual Medicine*, Ibn Falaquera's *Balm for Assuaging Grief* and Joseph Ibn 'Aqin's *Hygiene of the Soul*.

<sup>10</sup> Singer (2013: 7–8).

authority. This study has demonstrated that Galen's moralism is in close dialogue with the practical ethics of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, not in any passive or imitative fashion but through distinctive transformations. It would not be an exaggeration to say that, if we had all the works that have been lost from Galen's ethical corpus, we would have a completely different picture of Imperial-period practical ethics than the one we currently possess.

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