CHAPTER 1

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.[1]

[1] 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

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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.).[2] The thematic selection and bipolar organisation of the ethical material, together with the exhortative way in which it is communicated, make it action-directing,[3] 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?*

[2] 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).

[3] 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.

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'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.[4] 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'.[5] Scrutinisation 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.[6] 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.).[7] How exactly this occurs is not explained here,

[4] 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.

[5] 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.

[6] 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.'

[7] ἀπέχεσθαι δὲ δηλονότι τῆς ἀμετρίας αὐτοὺς χρὴ ἁπάντων τῶν ψυχικῶν παθῶν, ὀργῆς καὶ λύπης <*et gaudium*> καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ φόβου καὶ φθόνου· ἐξίστησι γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα, καὶ ἀλλοιοῖ τὸ σῶμα τῆς κατὰ φύσιν συστάσεως.

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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*).[8] 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.[9] 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.[10] 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

[8] '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' (ἀπαξιῶ μηδενὶ μέμφεσθαι τῶν σολοικιζόντων τῇ φωνῇ μηδ' ἐπιτιμᾶν. Ἄμεινον γάρ ἐστι 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).

[9] 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).

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

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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).[11] 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

[11] 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.

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doctors, the importance of 'waking up' to the shamefulness 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 (αἰδεσθέντες . . . ὥσπερ ἐξ ὕπνου βαθέος ἐγερθέντες), an experience no doubt familiar to all members of Galen's audience.[12]

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 *Thrasybulus* 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)[13]

[12] This comparison is used by Galen many times, e.g. *Diff. Resp*. 1.12, 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.

[13] τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ πλέον εἴη τοῖς χθὲς μὲν καὶ πρώην πεπαυμένοις τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν ἐμπίπλασθαί τε καὶ κοιμᾶσθαι, τόλμης δ᾽ εἰς τοσοῦτον ἥκουσιν, ὥσθ᾽ ὑπὲρ ὧν οὐδ᾽ οἱ ἱκανῶς ἠσκηκότες <τὴν> ἀκολούθων τε καὶ μαχομένων διάγνωσιν ἔχουσιν εὐπετῶς ἀποφήνασθαι, περὶ τούτων ἀναισχύντως διατείνεσθαι; τί μάθοιεν ἂν οὗτοι βαθὺ καὶ σοφὸν καὶ ἀκριβὲς ἀκούσαντες θεώρημα; θαυμαστὸν μέντ᾽ ἂν ἦν, εἰ τοῖς μὲν ἐκ παίδων ἀσκουμένοις ἐν τοῖς ἀρίστοις μαθήμασιν οὐχ ἅπασιν ὑπάρχει κριταῖς ἀγαθοῖς εἶναι τῆς τοιαύτης θεωρίας, ὅσοι δ᾽ ἀσκοῦνται μέν, ὥστ᾽ ἐν ἄθλοις νικᾶν, ἀφυεῖς δ᾽ ὄντες κἀκεῖ στεφάνων μὲν ἠτύχησαν, ἐξαίφνης δ᾽ ἀνεφάνησαν γυμνασταί,

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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[14] that speaks to contemporary readers. In this passage from *Thrasybulus*, 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 ἐγρήγορσις μᾶλλον καὶ φροντὶς οὐκ ἀμαθὴς ἢ ὕπνος ὀξὺν τὸν νοῦν ἀπεργάζονται καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς ἁπάντων σχεδὸν ἀνθρώπων ᾄδεται, διότι πάντων ἐστὶν ἀληθέστατον, ὡς γαστὴρ ἡ παχεῖα τὸν νοῦν οὐ τίκτει τὸν λεπτόν. ἴσως οὖν ἡ κόνις ἔτι μόνη σοφίαν αὐτοῖς ἐδωρήσατο. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πηλόν, ἐν ᾧ πολλάκις ἐκυλινδοῦντο, τίς ὑπολαμβάνει σοφίας εἶναι δημιουργὸν ὁρῶν γε καὶ τοὺς σῦς ἐν αὐτῷ διατρίβοντας; ἀλλ᾿ οὐδ᾿ ἐν τοῖς ἀποπάτοις εἰκός, ἐν οἷς διημέρευον, ἀγχίνοιαν φύεσθαι. καὶ μὴν παρὰ ταῦτ᾿ οὐδὲν ἄλλο πρότερον ἔπραττον· ὅλον γὰρ ἑωρῶμεν αὐτῶν τὸν βίον ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ περιόδῳ συστρεφόμενον ἢ ἐσθιόντων ἢ πινόντων ἢ κοιμωμένων ἢ ἀποπατούντων ἢ κυλινδουμένων ἐν κόνει τε καὶ πηλῷ. Τούτους οὖν ἀποπέμψαντες.

[14] 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'.

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> 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.[15] *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)[16] but also individual flourishing (εὐδαιμονίαν),

[15] Ὅπερ ἀεὶ λέγω καὶ νῦν ἐρῶ, πεπεισμένος ὅτι χαλεπώτατόν ἐστι μεταστῆναι πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοὺς φθάσαντας αἱρέσει δουλεύειν. ὅσοι δὲ συνετοί τε ἅμα καὶ ἀληθείας ὄντως φίλοι, τούτους ἐλπίζω φυλάξειν τὰ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως ἡμῖν δοθέντα κριτήρια τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων, ἐμπειρίαν καὶ λόγον… αἵ γάρ τοι ψευδεῖς δόξαι, προκαταλαμβάνουσαι τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οὐ μόνον κωφούς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τυφλοὺς ἐργάζονται τῶν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐναργῶς ὁρωμένων.

[16] '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 ἀμβλυνθῆναι χρηστοῖς 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.

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predicated on freedom from corrosive passions.[17] 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.[18] Such active interrogation of the narrated material corresponds exactly to the kind of reading skills

[17] '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' (ἐὰν οὖν ἐξέλῃς τοῦ μέλλοντος ἀλήθειαν ζητήσειν ἀλαζονείαν φιλαυτίαν φιλοτιμίαν φιλοδοξίαν δοξοσοφίαν φιλοχρηματίαν, ἐφ' ἣν εἶπον ὁδόν, ἀφίξεται πάντως <τ'> ἐν αὐτῇ [τε] προγυμνασάμενος, οὐ μησίν, ἀλλ' ἔτεσί ποθ' ὕστερον ζητήσει τὰ 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).

[18] 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 hairesis*' (transl. Walzer and Frede). Cf. ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλὰ τῶν μὴ λεγομένων ἐξ ἐμφύτου συνέσεως εὑρίσκεις 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.

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ancient pedagogy attempted to foster.[19] 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 ...[20] *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.[21] Their role was limited to assimilating Galen's ready-made advice into their personal moral

[19] 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.

[20] ὥρα δὴ καὶ σοὶ τοῖσδε τοῖς γράμμασιν ὁμιλοῦντι σκοπεῖσθαι, ποτέρου μεθέξεις χοροῦ, πότερον τοῦ περὶ Πλάτωνά τε καὶ Ἱπποκράτην καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἄνδρας, οἳ 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 πρός με τολμήσας εἰπεῖν, ὥστε δεινὸν εἶναι νομίζειν ἀνίστασθαι τῆς κλίνης ἀποπατήσοντα· βέλτιον γὰρ ἂν οὕτω κατεσκευάσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, εἰ μόνον τὸν πόδα προτείνων ἐξέκρινε δι᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ περιττώματα. τί δὴ τὸν τοιοῦτον οἴει πάσχειν ἢ δρᾶν κατὰ μόνας ἢ πῶς ἐξυβρίζειν εἰς πάντας τοῦ σώματος τοὺς πόρους ἢ πῶς λελωβῆσθαί τε καὶ διεφθάρθαι τὰ κάλλιστα τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀνάπηρον μὲν αὐτὴν καὶ τυφλὴν παντάπασι τὴν θείαν ἀπεργασάμενον δύναμιν, ᾗ μόνῃ πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος ἀλήθειαν θεάσασθαι, μεγάλην δὲ καὶ ἰσχυρὰν καὶ ἄπληστον ἡδονῶν παρὰ νόμον καὶ τυραννοῦσαν ἀδίκως τὴν χειρίστην καὶ θηριωδεστάτην ἔχοντα δύναμιν; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως εἰ τοιούτων ἐπὶ πλέον μνημονεύοιμι βοσκημάτων, οἱ σωφρονοῦντες ὀρθῶς ἄν μοι μέμφοιντο καὶ μιαίνειν φαῖεν ἱερὸν λόγον, ὃν ἐγὼ τοῦ δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀληθινὸν συντίθημι ...

[21] 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.

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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'.[22] 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)[23] rests on the readers' capacity for 'thought' in the face of moral 'problematisation', as Michel Foucault put it, in setting up a similar conceptualisation of the breakdown.[24]

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),[25] 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

[22] Zigon (2007: 140).

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

[24] 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'.

[25] The same comparison is used also in *Ind.* 12, 78.14-16 PX.

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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.

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