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1

Introduction: Medicine for the Sick Soul

In the dedication to his praise of an ass, *Laus asini*, Dutch humanist Daniel Heinsius (1580–1655) censured social evils and the world’s sick condition in medical terms. His dedication was addressed to Ewald Schrevel, a professor of medicine at Leiden, whose expert opinion of the current age Heinsius sought: “Touch it and feel its pulse, will you? I’ll bet that you’ll agree with Democritus, saying that ‘this is no longer mere error, this is disease.’” (1629b, p. 2.)¹ As signs of the morbid condition of the contemporary world, Heinsius mentioned inverted values. Contempt was shown towards the virtuous and the learned, and everything that was noble or worthy of eternal fame was treated with disgust. Geniuses and salutary authors of the ilk of Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, Plutarch and Cicero were abhorred and treated as if they were mere waste products. In Heinsius’s view, in his day everybody was merely chasing the shadow of an ass.²

Heinsius’s rhetoric of universal sickness and the wrong notions of the multitude reflected a conventional humanistic set of values in his insistence on knowing ancient authors and complaining about the present barbaric state of higher education. Pathological terms were frequently used in this connection by humanists to describe the decline of classical learning or the decay of the world in general (cf. Kühlmann 1982, pp. 67–112). But what is more important here is that Heinsius’s medical rhetoric, using terms of universal pathology, also summarised the view that satirists have often held of a society and its inhabitants. In interpreting its evils in pathological terms, diagnosing vices as diseases and describing the ubiquity of madness, authors of satires have frequently applied medical imagery in their art of moral castigation. Significantly, Heinsius’s list of neglected authorities also included

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ancient philosophers and medical authors, who will have an important role in illustrating the medical analogies in this study.

The medical analogy between vices and physical diseases is an important tool with which to analyse the nature and functioning of satire. Throughout history, satirists have employed images of bodily weakness and diseases as indices of the human condition. Human beings have been represented as ailing patients suffering from physical illnesses that were analogies for mental and moral defects needing improvement and medical care. The sources of illnesses were usually found in questionable living habits. Among the Roman satirists, Lucilius (c. 180–102 BC) had already declared that “We see him who is sick in mind showing the mark of it on his body” (26, frg. 678; trans. E. H. Warmington). Horace (65–8 BC) playfully argued – echoing the Stoics – that hardly anyone was deemed sane or healthy, since the world of satire was crowded with sick people (*Sermones* 2.3.32). Humanity’s sick condition was specified as the reason for writing satires. Horace stated that vices were so common that anyone picked at random from a crowd was probably plagued with either avarice or some disease of ambition (*Sermones* 1.4.25–6). Even the impulse to write was considered a disease: Juvenal referred to writer’s itch (*scribendi cacoethes*) as a sick obsession (7.52).³ At the end of his tenth satire, Juvenal added his famous plea, which might serve as a motto for all Roman satire, namely, the best one can ask for is “a sound mind in a sound body” (10.356).

In Renaissance and later *Narrenliteratur*, such as Johann Beer’s *Narrenspital* (1681), foolishness was often depicted as a cancerous tumour, which insidiously overcomes ever more victims and is cured only with difficulty. It has been suggested that in the seventeenth century, art in general abandoned the demand for realistic imitation and had emphatic recourse to analogies, metaphors, hyperboles and paradoxes.⁴ One expression of this changing aesthetic atmosphere was seen in the increased attention given to medical themes and images in literature and in the adoption of medical or physiological titles for books, such as Thomas Nashe’s *Anatomy of Absurditie* (1589), John Donne’s *Anatomy of the World* (1611) or the anonymous anatomy of a conscience, *Anatome joco-seria conscientiae* (1664). This fashion coincided with the development of scientific anatomical knowledge, which drew attention to the hidden structures of the human being; early modern anatomies were sometimes ostensibly moral works and employed the anatomy as an aggressive critical method to study vices (Hodges 1985, p. 6).⁵ At the beginning of *Anatome joco-seria conscientiae* (pp. 3–4), the author apologised to doctors for intruding on their field by examining an anatomical issue, but his intention was to

show how men in ecclesiastical, political, legal and medical professions disguised their true nature with different veils, mantles and a glossy skin and appealed to an apparently rational and justified action. The author proposed to perform a post mortem on a cadaverous Germany, which was releasing an ugly stench of iniquity into the world.

This anatomical act of revealing men's inner corners was a satirical act par excellence and characterised the genre not only in the seventeenth century, but also in earlier and subsequent periods. For Northrop Frye, anatomy was the synonym of Menippean satire, its most famous representative being Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Frye preferred to call Menippean satire anatomy, because it dissected and anatomised disabled intellectual behaviour and, in his words, the Menippean satirist saw evil and folly as diseases of the intellect (1973, pp. 309, 311).⁶

Given that medical imagery was continually used both in verse satire and in Menippean satire to discuss man's moral and intellectual existence, this study is intended to provide an introduction to medical issues and images used in the tradition of Latin satire. What kinds of diseases were satirically described? What functions had physical diseases in satires? What was the therapy? I will explore how generic conventions shaped the representations of disease, from general moral aspects to the role of the satirist and the (supposed) curative effects of satire on readers. I will focus on selected ancient and early modern Latin satires that toyed with medical topics and commented on individual immoral conditions. These texts range from morally critical satires written in the tradition of Roman verse to the more ambiguous traditions of paradoxical disease encomia. Another group of source materials includes late fifteenth- to early seventeenth-century poetics, humanist commentaries and prefaces to Roman satire that maintained a close relationship to ethical issues and considered satire as a form of healing instruction. Antonio Minturno (c. 1500–74), Jacobus Pontanus (1542–1626) and Daniel Heinsius, among others, used diagnostic and therapeutic vocabulary in their poetics when defining the satirist's duty to cure suffering and disturbed souls. The analogy was one way to defend satire from attacks against its immorality and to insist on its usefulness.

In the following pages, I will first briefly explain what I understand with the concept of medical analogy. Then I will introduce the reader to the moral nature of satire and briefly explore its relationship to moral philosophy. This is useful in showing how these two moral discourses overlapped especially in terms of their ethical goals and the medical analogies, which they frequently employed. The ancient philosophical

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uses of medical analogy supply clues to understanding certain details and discussions in the satirical texts, which also frequently referred to the Latin Stoics, Cicero and Seneca in particular. For example, the arguments against the grief caused by suffering were culled from ancient philosophical sources. After this introduction, I will tentatively present two issues that will appear repeatedly throughout this discussion – the figure of the physician and images of disease.

The analogy

Although my primary objective is to answer the question of how medical metaphors and terms have served satirical critique, for clarifying the background it is important to observe the use of medical discourse in different contexts. The goals of healing have traditionally been associated with all kinds of writings, not only with satires. During the Renaissance the curative effects of all poetry were often expressed in medical terms, and poetry was regarded as an instrument of moral discourse, bringing health to sick minds and driving out vice by offering virtuous and uplifting examples to imitate. Nicodemus Frischlin (1547–90), a German satirist, Protestant and professor of poetry and history at Tübingen, argued in his speech on the dignity and utility of poetry, *De dignitate et multiplici utilitate Poeseos* (1568), that poets were doctors of life who marked noble aspirations with white chalk and things to avoid with black carbon. Frischlin's interpretation of poetry, to which verse satire belonged, was clearly moralistic; in their appeals to poetry's salutary effects, other authors often also attributed this action to the beauty of the words and the sweetness of the verses rather than exclusively to the ethical content. But all stressed that the relationship between poetry and medicine was never merely metaphorical, for diseases had a psychological and physiological foundation and the healing of poetry affected both aspects of the human being (Weinberg 1961, pp. 17–23; Schmitz 1972, pp. 49–52). Other discourses, such as incantations, prayers, religious sermons, comedy,⁷ love poetry⁸ or consolations,⁹ have also been regarded as therapeutic speech. Sophism, the art of persuading through words, was understood as verbal catharsis, and Gorgias compared persuasive speech with healing drugs (Nussbaum 1996, p. 51; Deupmann 2002, p. 95). Christ was called *Christus medicus* in medieval theology (Steiger 2005), and God was called “the celestial physician” by the church fathers and Petrarch (Carraud 2002, pp. 177, 423). However, therapeutic discourse was particularly prevalent in the Renaissance and frequently took the form of satire.

Ancient medical doctors and philosophers in particular were popular sources for ancient and early modern Latin satirists in this sense.¹⁰ Galen (129–c. 199), whose medical thinking showed the heavy influence of philosophy, believed that the faculties of the soul were dependent on the mixtures in the body, and the mind's condition could be improved by improving physical health (Sellars 2003, pp. 67–8; Scarborough 1969, p. 115). Even though Plato is considered the first to have made the mind subject to philosophical purification or catharsis (Laín Entralgo 1970, pp. 127–37), the analogy between medicine and philosophy was more pervasive in Stoic texts than in other Hellenistic schools. Chrysippus of Soli (c. 280–204 BC) wrote at the beginning of his *Therapeutics* (his fourth book *On Affections*) that “it is not true that whereas there is an art, called medicine, concerned with the diseased body, there is no art concerned with the diseased soul, or that the latter [art] is necessarily inferior to the former in the theory and therapeutic treatment of particular cases” (trans. Tieleman 2003, p. 144). Chrysippus compared disease of the soul, which is subjected to the random motions of affections, to a feverish state of the body. The Stoics related all qualities to the body: the soul was corporeal, and thus virtue and vice also had a corporeal basis. Stoicism paralleled physical and moral sickness/wellness, and the well-being of the soul was discussed in terms of the balance of the body and the equilibrium of its humours. Health resided in a balanced proportion of the four elemental qualities in body and soul alike (Tieleman 2003, p. 157). Passions were largely understood as disturbances and harmful diseases that needed to be cured by philosophy whose rational and wise words were regarded as medicine for the disordered soul. It has often been stressed that due to the corporeality of the soul, the relationship between medicine and philosophy was not simply a decorative stylistic device in Stoic thinking, but rather good advice and learning were thought quite literally to advance moral and physical health as well (Tieleman 2003, pp. 144–7).

Cicero (106–43 BC) also discussed diseases of the soul. In the third and fourth books of *Tusculanae disputationes*, Cicero praised philosophy as therapy for the sick. He claimed that diseases of the soul were more dangerous and numerous than those of the body. He encouraged everyone to act as his own doctor, stressing in the Stoic manner the importance of self-examination in making progress towards virtue. The role of philosophy in healing was crucial (3.3.6, *Est profecto animi medicina, philosophia*).¹¹ Cicero claimed that it healed the soul, took away unnecessary troubles, set one free from desires and expelled fears (2.4.11). The body and the mind were sane and healthy when balanced and tranquil

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and when beliefs and judgements were in harmony (4.13.30). Wisdom was called a sound and healthy condition of the mind, whereas desires confused the mind and were therefore called the mind's distress or pain (*aegritudo*) or disease (*morbus*) (3.5.10).¹² They resulted from contempt for reason (4.14.31).

Seneca (5 BC–AD 65) used medical metaphors vividly, for instance, in his *Epistles*, where his own poor condition, aches and sufferings were often an excuse for his philosophical discussions, and he frequently referred to the curative function of wise words.¹³ Most of the images he used were taken from the field of pathology and therapy and applied in comparisons describing the human condition and the philosopher's duty to cure suffering and disturbed souls. For example, Seneca defined hardened and chronic vices such as greed and ambition as diseases that were persistent evils and therefore difficult to control and sometimes incurable (*Epistulae* 75.11).

Among the popular ancient philosophers, Plutarch (c. 45–125) also had a special interest in medicine. His works abounded in medical references and common sense advice on good living. When dealing with virtue he claimed that “a soul possessed of excessive pain or joy or fear is like a swollen and feverish body” (“On moral virtue”, *Moralia* 452A; trans. W. C. Helmbold). In another passage he compared the soul suffering from pains and outbursts of passion and anger with physical straining and convulsions (“On the control of anger”, *Moralia* 457C). The moral instruction he gave for living the good life was related to physical health as well, since, as he said in “Advice about keeping well”, the less expensive things were usually healthy for the body, while luxury went hand in hand with illness (*Moralia* 123D–E). Disease imagery was much used by Plutarch when defending moderation. He advised men who were living luxuriously to put a stop to their insatiate desires or else they were “but decanting wine for a man in a fever, offering honey to a bilious man, and preparing tid-bits and dainties for sufferers from colic or dysentery [...]” (“Virtue and vice”, *Moralia* 101C; trans. Frank Cole Babbitt). In Plutarch's view, ailing men were not strengthened by drinks and tasty foods, but only brought nearer death. Restoring the healthy balance through an ordered lifestyle and self-restraint was also the satirist's goal.¹⁴

The diseases treated by philosophy were above all the diseases of belief and judgement or of passions and desires. The remedy offered by the philosopher was *logos*. The frequency of the analogy was confirmed by Cicero who took an interest in the analogy, but also complained

of being tired of the excessive attention given to such over-elaborate images (*Tusc.* 4.10.23).

In the manner of philosophers, satirists have stressed the instructive function of their poetry and proclaimed themselves to be healers of individual and collective corruption. The satires that I will examine here often summarised popular ethical thinking, as mediated by the Roman Stoics, and cleverly applied its favoured themes and devices, including medical images, which had passed from philosophy into diatribe and satire. Although the philosopher's advice to restore balance in the body, for example, by adhering to a strict diet had its parallels in Hippocratic medicine's dietary regulations, it is important to observe that medical images in the satires studied here were not determined by medical developments or borrowed from medical science; rather, they continued and participated in the moralising discourses of ancient (Stoic) philosophy in which the analogy between wise words and medicine was common. Satire also affected Roman philosophy: Marcus Wilson (1997, pp. 57–8) claims that in Seneca's ironic epistle 99 ("On consolation to the bereaved") there was a marked resemblance to Roman satire; moreover, Horace's epistles had clearly influenced Seneca's epistolary practice. According to Wilson, when Seneca ridiculed his opponents he used satire as a key weapon in his rhetorical armoury. Therefore, throughout this study I will discuss how the pervasiveness of the analogy built between satirical writing and medicine reflected the influence of philosophical thinking. This shows the significance of philosophical issues and debates for the interpretation of Latin satire.

Shared goals of satire and moral philosophy

A Leipzig professor of theology, Friedrich Rappolt (1615–76), who wrote a commentary on Horace's works, was among the numerous early modern authors to note the close connections among satire, moral philosophy and medicine (1675, Caput III). By reference to Cicero and Plutarch, who both saw philosophy as therapy for the sick mind and the vices that resided either in the reason or the appetites, Rappolt attributed the same twofold function to satire (*rationis et appetitus, utriusque partis morbo, ut Philosophi, sic et Satyra medetur*). Satire cured both the intellect and the passions by driving out ignorance and purging the human appetites of bad habits. In Rappolt's view, the object of satirical pharmacy was found in the unhealthy appetites and infirmities of the mind and the reason.¹⁵

Renaissance poetics and humanist commentaries on Roman satire repeatedly stressed these ethically healing goals and noted the close connection between moral philosophy and satirical writing.¹⁶ Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), who composed an influential treatise on Greek satirical poetry and Roman satire, *De satyrica Graecorum poesi & Romanorum satira libri duo* (1605), argued that Roman satire consisted of two main principles: moral doctrine and wit (*urbanitas, sales*). Like poetry in general, satire was characterised by eloquence and the art of verse, but its main content differed from other poetry in being devoted to condemning vices and recommending virtues and using humour and jests as its tools to reach these goals (Schäfer 1992, p. 59). Satire not only set out to heal the moral and emotional life of the patient by attacking his appetites and passions, but also to cure his intellect of ignorance and foolishness. It aimed at an overall perfection of the soul, and thus the two fields of moral discourse seemed to share the same interests. The utmost healthiness of the texts was also realised in the characterisations of individual authors. Horace in particular was frequently identified as a healing satirist and his sermons equated with drugs and mixtures that medicated the sick soul of the sinner. And later Goethe claimed that the Jesuit satirist Jacob Balde (1604–68) resembled a pineapple, reminding him of all kinds of delicious fruits without, however, losing his own palatable individuality (Schäfer 1976, p. 161). The parallel activities in the fields of satire and philosophy were appreciated still in the twentieth century, as is clear from such articles as C. W. Mendell's "Satire as popular philosophy" (1920), in which satire was studied as a popular presentation of practical philosophy. But if satire did not equal moral philosophy, how did it differ from it? This question was also formulated as: how did satire deliver its criticism?

One difference often noted was that the goal of satire was to cure people of vices and false beliefs as sources of misery, but instead of offering reasonable argumentation, comprehensive doctrine or systematic theories about the good life, satires were therapeutic in a different manner.¹⁷ As Horace put it, philosophers gave reasons why things were desirable or avoidable, but satirical moral criticism was based on illustrative, warning examples of people who exceeded the proper mean: "Invalids who are tempted to over-eat are given a fright by the funeral / of the man next door, and the terror of death compels them to go easy; / in the same way young folk are often deterred from doing wrong / by the ill repute of other people" (*Sermones* 1.4.126–9; trans. Niall Rudd). Vices that were approached as abstract concepts in philosophy were turned into concrete examples of the misdeeds and wrong actions of human

beings in order to make the ethical point appealing and clear. The benefits of a frightful reflection on the dying were also recognised in the medieval tradition of the *contemptus mundi*. It recorded graphic and macabre details of death's horrors and of bodily putrefaction in order to visualise human misery (McClure 1990, p. 24).

The concrete representation of vices did not merely reinforce moral conclusions but formed the essential equipment of the genre. Casaubon claimed that:

Roman satire shared with moral philosophy an interest in morals and manners, but these two fields had their characteristic ways of dealing with the issue. Philosophy acted by teaching; satire, mainly by condemning; the philosopher inquired into the nature and reasons for virtues and vices, whereas the satirical poet castigated the vicious and only rarely praised the virtuous.¹⁸

Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453–1505) noted that “satirists philosophised by bringing to light the secret crimes and shameful deeds of women and men and thereby restoring them to good health [...]; the satirists’ censuring verses have the same effect as philosophers’ books and dogmas” (quoted in Latin in Pagrot 1961, p. 55). Georg Pasch (1661–1707), a professor of practical theology and philosophy at Kiel, who discussed literature’s ability to transmit morals in his *De variis modis moralia tradendi* (1707), voiced the same difference in his Preface as follows:

When dealing with virtues and vices, historians and poets do not consider these in an abstract way (as the Logicians do); nor do they in the manner of philosophers mine their causes or nature. Instead they present men devoted to virtues or vices, assessing their deeds and manners and giving examples that are either worth imitating or avoiding. Thus, they advise us silently to watch human lives and take them as a model.¹⁹

Compared with satire, the philosophical teaching methods were considered dogmatic and founded upon meagre rules and sombre precepts. Thomas Farnaby (c. 1575–1647) argued in his commentary on Persius that satire added life to this dryness by drawing stimulating examples and detailed descriptions of vices. Farnaby equated satire with Aristotle’s ethics and Epictetus’ and Seneca’s Stoic learning (1650, A2^v). Jacobus Pontanus concurred in his *Poeticae institutiones* (1594, p. 173),

saying that:

although satire should forcefully urge men to attain virtue and to avoid vices, it does not perform this task by arguing. Such commissions were left to philosophy, which was the sole master of virtues and an interpreter of vices. Satire required a clever, sharp-eyed, swift, eloquent and astute mind that did not abhor or abstain from playfulness.

Thus, the humanist poet Conrad Celtis (1459–1508) and his pupil Joachim Vadian (1484–1551), the latter in his *De poetica et carminis ratione*, even suggested that the teachings of Plato and Aristotle could be replaced by such satirical philosophers as Horace.²⁰ The German Protestants took pains to legitimise Horace's satires as the renewal of the ideal co-existence of eloquence and wisdom, considering his satires useful to Christian thinking in their ethical criticism, but rejecting their Epicurean tones (Schäfer 1976, pp. 45–52). And Frischlin claimed that reading Horace was useful to philosophers, because he presented salutary precepts of living in a much more beautiful form than Chrysippus or Crantor (1609, *Epistola dedicatoria*, p. 4).

Even though satires have usually spoken for healthy moderation and plain living without relying on specific philosophical schools or theories, the Cynic–Stoic philosophy furnished the main background of whatever identifiable philosophical content there was in classical satire. Both the ancient Cynics and the Stoics acquired the reputation of being frank preachers against the immoral. Francesco Robortello (1516–67) remarked in his treatise on satire entitled *Explicatio eorum omnium quae ad satyram pertinent* (1548), that Greek philosophers also used malediction in correcting manners. Socrates, Diogenes, Menippus, Democritus and the Cynics in general were mentioned here as the predecessors of satire (1970, p. 503). Socrates, of course, was mentioned on account of his famous irony and playful mode of argumentation, and the jocular-serious attacks on vices by the Cynic Menippus were continued in Menippean satire.²¹ This satirical form was also indebted to philosophy, but in a different way than Roman verse satire. According to Casaubon, the Roman polymath Varro mixed philology and philosophy in his satires and offered healthy precepts in verse (1605, p. 259). In Casaubon's view, Varro wrote playful philosophy (p. 267, *philosophia ludens*), and Lucian also concealed serious philosophy under his comic joyfulness (p. 268). But in their Menippean satires moral issues were never addressed in a normative manner. If Roman verse satire contained serious ethical

instruction under a playful cover, Menippean satire was “not merely a pleasant form for the statement of ethical truth”, as Joel C. Relihan put it (1993, p. 17). Rather, Menippean satire parodied philosophical thought and discourse that aspired to express the truth in words. Thus, Menippean satire parodied satirical preaching and instruction as well. But not even in verse satire were moral norms unambiguous, since their consistent irony and exaggeration often undermined and destabilised the thesis the satirist seemed to submit. For example, Jacob Balde’s satirical poetry, although written in the tradition of verse satire, expresses the Menippean tension “between jokes at the expense of philosophy and jokes in the service of philosophy” (Relihan 1993, p. 181). Thus, there were many degrees in and between mere didacticism that offered elementary ethical lessons and playfulness for dealing with moral issues in a more ambiguous manner. This attitude of *serio ludere* in exploring moral issues also suggests a certain freedom with moral standards.

The satirist as an expert healer

Of the medical images and characters used in satirical analogies, the figure of the physician was centrally important. In early modern satires the physician often played an ambivalent role, and the satirical texts balanced criticism with praise of doctors. Inept physicians were popular figures of fun in various humorous texts – Renaissance satires, epigrams, anecdotes and *facetiae* collections – that condemned the incompetence of quacks or laughed at the scatological facilities used in therapy. Doctor stereotypes were suspected of a myriad of moral failings, including plotting, poisoning, adultery, false ambitions, appetite for fame, money-making, violence, superficial diagnostics, blind reliance on book learning, lack of training, haphazard prescription of medicines and the use of incomprehensible diagnostic language redolent with Latin nonsense.²² They were represented as the only human beings allowed to kill without punishment, even being well rewarded for their questionable services.²³ For example, Euricius Cordus (1486–1535) was a fertile German epigrammatist and a medical doctor in Bremen, whose poems fiercely attacked doctors (Ijsewijn and Sacré 1998, p. 113). Heinrich Bebel’s (1472–1514) three books of *Facetiae* (1508–12) contained – along with stupid peasants, lusty women, corrupted monks and other traditional sources of ridicule – amusing stories of doctors’ errors familiar from the medieval exemplum tradition. One of his stories went like this (II.15, *De errore cuiusdam medici*): A certain doctor had an old and a young patient. The old but rich man was newly married to

a blooming younger woman; wishing to ensure his matrimonial happiness, he asked for *diasatyrion*, a kind of Renaissance viagra, while the young patient, who suffered from fever and indigestion, was prescribed laxatives. But the doctor mistakenly mixed up the medicines, causing a most unpleasant night for both patients: the adolescent suffered from an all-night erection and the old man, embracing his bride in preparation for an erotic struggle, got diarrhoea and soiled the wedding bed with excrement.²⁴ Another popular anecdote recorded a similar confusion when a blind man accidentally swallowed the urine and faeces that a doctor was examining for signs of illness (*Nugae venales*, p. 316; *Antidotum melancholiae*, p. 73).

In his *Medicinae gloria*, Jacob Balde, whose medical satires will be discussed below, derided the incompetence of *simiae medicorum*, female quacks and poisoners (1651, *Praefatio*, p. 368).²⁵ Likewise, popular collections of Latin anecdotes, epigrams and short word studies, such as *Iocorum atque seriorum centuriae* edited by Otho and Dionysius Melander (1617), *Antidotum melancholiae joco serium* (1668) and *Nugae venales* (1642), which was addressed to serious men and fathers of melancholics, printed by Nemo and published in Ubique, contained a number of medical (mainly scatological) anecdotes and invectives against unqualified healers. One popular story (*In medicum quendam*) told of a physician who was so well versed in sending men to the Underworld that his son did not need a grammarian to instruct him about the Hades myth (*Nugae venales*, p. 320). Another frequently reprinted epigram claimed that in the patient's eyes, doctors were three-faced monsters (*Aesculapius trifrons*): the first impression left was of a human being, but when the patient prayed that God or an angel would come to heal him, Satan entered, demanding burdensome remuneration (*Nugae venales*, p. 320; *Antidotum melancholiae*, p. 73). The angel, *angelus*, was also an anagram of Galenus (Wiegand 1992, p. 249).

Various discursive traditions, such as proverbs, provided further examples of doctors' suspicious work: Christian Lange (1619–62), himself a professor of physiology at Leipzig and a dean of the medical faculty, discussed in his medical miscellany, *Miscellanea curiosa medica* (1688, Ch. XXVI), the etymologies of the common proverb *mentiris ut medicus* ("you lie like a medical doctor"), which in Lange's words expressed ingratitude. Other popular and ironic sayings were the slightly modified Hippocratic aphorism *ars longa, vita brevis* (Engelhardt 1992, p. 40), and *recipe decipe*, which associated prescriptions with giving and deceiving through a phonetic likeness, as if through an incantation (*Nugae venales*, p. 10).

Such attacks and prejudices against doctors were extremely common in early modern pictorial and literary satire. But in this study I will not deal with the medical doctor as a traditional, stereotypical object of derision, but with his less familiar role, that of a rational voice and a representative of the satirical author. In Roman verse satire, the satirist often identified himself with a medical doctor who treated his patient either as a worried friend or a stern examiner. An example of the physician's role was to be found in Horace's first satire, directed against greed, where he described the lot of a wealthy man who had caught a feverish chill. Contrary to the patient's expectations, he was not surrounded by his family members preparing poultices or calling the doctor to relieve his pains, but instead his wife, son, friends and neighbours were waiting for his struggles to end in another, final way (*Sermones* 1.1.80–5). A very similar scene is found in satire 2.3. Unlike the family members, the doctor here was a loyal friend (*medicus [...] fidelis*, 2.3.147), as he was in Seneca's *De beneficiis* (6.16.4–5), taking personal and assiduous care of his patient in the name of humanity and compassion. For Seneca, a good doctor was present when needed, feeling his patient's pulse, advising on what to avoid and prescribing remedies. Seneca's ideal doctor was acting out of love and motivated by deeper concern for the patient's welfare; this role of a persistent guardian was taken up by the satirists as well.²⁶ The satirist's curative role was noted in Horace's epistle (1.1.34–5), which defined healing words as a remedy: words and sayings soothed the pain of a heart inflamed with greed and wretched craving and helped it to get rid of the ailment.

This expert position had its parallel in philosophical discourse and in the authoritative role it gave to the doctor. For example, Marcus Wilson has observed that the therapeutic metaphor used in philosophy “presupposes a physician sufficiently calm and detached to make accurate diagnoses and offer apt and salutary counsel” and “a patient whose needs are primarily negative, to obtain release from pain and illness” (1997, p. 48). This dichotomy between the healthy therapist and the sick patient also characterises satire. In the manner of a philosophical teaching situation, there was a marked asymmetry of roles: the doctor represented authority; the patient, the obedient recipient of this authority. Thus, doctors were truth-speakers, and the satirist as an ideal doctor adopted not only the expert's authoritative position but also his habit of skilful critical examination. The doctor-satirist voiced the author's professional opinion of the moral condition of man. In his *De constantia sapientis* (13.2), Seneca remarked that the wise man's attitude towards all men was like the physician's to his patients. He did not

scorn touching their private parts if they were in need of medical treatment; he endured patients' insults, for he knew that all men, especially those who were well dressed in togas and in purple, were, despite their strong and wealthy appearance, unsound and similar to sick men.

In his essay entitled "Whether the affections of the soul are worse than those of the body", Plutarch remarked that diseases of the flesh were detected by the pulse, and temperatures and sudden pains confirmed their presence, but evils of the soul were more difficult to detect (*Moralia* 500E–F). They escaped the notice of most men and were therefore worse evils, since at the same time they deprived the patient of self-awareness. Only a sound reason, such as the philosopher-doctor's, could perceive the diseases, whereas a sick soul could not properly judge its own afflictions. Plutarch cited ignorance as the greatest disease of the soul, stressed the importance of self-awareness and accused mentally and morally sick people of rejecting the help offered by philosophers. And in another essay Plutarch deemed incurable those who took a hostile attitude towards admonishment and helpers; the prospects for progress were, therefore, weaker in their case ("How a man may become aware of his progress in virtue", *Moralia* 82A). Just as human beings should learn to know the peculiarities of their own pulse and to recognise pathological symptoms in their body, so in the same way they were responsible for knowing their minds and souls. Physicians assisted in the development of self-awareness, but most importantly the patient himself should take charge of his own condition (cf. Nussbaum 1996, pp. 344–5).

Roman satirists shared this view. They frequently pointed to their targets' ignorance and stupid refusal to obey the doctor's orders and to accept a much-needed remedy offered to them. In his *Epistles*, Horace marvelled that madness often went unnoticed by the patient, who nevertheless needed to have a doctor or a guardian nearby (1.1.102, *ne medici credis nec curatoris egere*). Horace argued that if someone's lungs or kidneys were attacked by an acute disease, such a person normally looked for a cure (*Epistulae* 1.6.28–9), or when he suffered from eye disease, he immediately used ointment (*Sermones* 1.5.30). The same thing should take place in dealing with moral health. Horace also described a doctor's futile attempt to cure a boy from quartan fever. Thanks to luck or the doctor, as Horace put it, the boy had already succeeded in shaking off the fever, but his mother had prayed for him and promised the gods that should he be cured, she would allow him to stand naked in the River Tiber on fasting day – with serious consequences to the patient (*Sermones* 2.3.290–5). Here Horace construed an antagonism between

the religious, irrational mother and the rational healer. Superstitious men and women cast the doctor from their house and classified all diseases as afflictions of an evil spirit or a malicious god. Instead, diseases should be rationally interpreted and treated by an expert healer. Likewise, Juvenal argued that women who were ill were particularly prone to resort to astrological methods. When a woman got an itch in the corner of her eye, she used no prescribed ointment before studying her horoscope, and when sick, she followed a careful timing for taking food in accordance with the recommendations of an Egyptian priest and astrologer whom she assumed to be possessed of the utmost expertise (6.578–81).²⁷ William Anderson has noted that the antithesis between a wise doctor and a stupid patient appeared in Persius' satires as well, even though the doctor was more eager to point out the patients' sicknesses than to cure them (1982, p. 178).

Both in Stoic philosophy and in satire, the sick soul equalled an irrational soul. The key contrast evoked was between reason and human beliefs or desires (Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.11.24). In the manner of philosophy, satire opposed people's reliance on wishing and prayer instead of judging their condition rationally. Divine forces, gods or fortune were not to be seen as punishment for wrong deeds; rather, punishment was natural in the sense that it followed directly from bad living. The satirists spoke forcefully for personal responsibility and individual moral choice; man was to accuse himself, his sinful excesses and luxurious way of life for sickness and misfortune.²⁸

The early modern doctor was still a moral instructor who acted as an advocate of abstinence and sobriety and admonished patients to shun drunkenness and control the passions. In his declamation, asking whether an orator should be preferred to a philosopher or a medical doctor (c. 1497), Filippo Beroaldo remarked that a philosopher was also a doctor, since he medicated the diseases of the mind, which were more frequent and pernicious than physical diseases (1648, p. 169). The doctor here responded that he was a philosopher of the body. In his extensive medical treatise *Institutiones medicinae*, Daniel Sennert (1572–1637) still considered these two arts to be closely related: by quoting Galen he stressed that a good physician should be well instructed both in medicine and in philosophy (1628, p. 132, *si quis optimus Medicus est, eundem esse Philosophum*). The philosopher, the satirist and the medical doctor all emphasised moderation and self-restraint as conducive to health. Plutarch said that a man recovering from an illness is satisfied with plain bread, cheese and cress. The convalescent luxuriated in little, and in Plutarch's words this was the condition in which reason

reigned in the soul (“Virtue and vice”, *Moralia* 101C–D). All the professions claimed to see through their respective objects and penetrate into the private sphere of great men. In the manner of the physician, the satirist examined the patient scientifically and gave advice for good living. The phases of diagnostics, from description to conclusion, were equivalent. Medicine and satire both adjudicated between the normal and the pathological, while satire also made moral diagnostics by separating the innocent from the guilty.

This cathartic process and the art of separating the good from the bad also became an important technical instrument in the early modern discussions of the goals of satirical writing. In Chapter 2, “Medical Meta-language”, I will deal with Daniel Heinsius’s ideas and those of his followers (especially Giovanni Volpi) about satirical catharsis. Heinsius became famous for his argument that satire had purifying effects on its readers similar to those of tragedy. The purging effect was thought to contribute to the reader’s moral improvement. Although Heinsius’s ideas of satirical purging became a commonplace that has often been mentioned in earlier histories of satire, in order to show the deeper relevance of the analogy I will examine in more detail his conception of satirical catharsis and the emotions of hatred, indignation and laughter that were essential in this purifying process.

However, in his *Cankered Muse*, Alvin Kernan has noted in studying Renaissance satire that at times the doctor-satirist abandoned his role as a good man and turned into a sadistic and malevolent quack, who tortured his victim and finally killed him, not for love of virtue or for the sake of healing, but for punishment and just for the fun of doing so (1959, pp. 93, 194–8). Such satirical attacks were difficult to justify by appealing to moral motives. At the end of Chapter 2, I will briefly deal with some sixteenth-century polemical satires, in which the traditional therapeutic images were reworked to punish the sins of specific contemporary enemies. The punishments took the form of therapeutic suffering, evident in such satires as Nicodemus Frischlin’s anti-Catholic reactions against a certain convert Jacob Rabe (c. 1567–68) and in the anonymous Reformation satire *Eccius dedolatus* (1520).

Internally sick: appetites as diseases

Different discourses conceptualise diseases disparately. In Christian rhetoric, diseases were often conceived as being a consequence of the Fall of Man or as evidence of divine reactions against either communal or individual sin (Siraisi 1990, pp. 4–10). Illnesses were interpreted as

spiritual trials that the sufferer should patiently accept. Disease metaphors have also been used to represent evil forces spreading through society. For example, the rhetoric of gouty swelling was used to depict the spread of wars, riots and other social disorders (Porter and Rousseau 1998, pp. 216–28). The world at its worst has been called a madhouse or bedlam (Engelhardt 1992, p. 40; Blanchard 1995, p. 43).²⁹ The suggested decay of the state has been described with diseases that punished whole communities or by arguing that an epidemic, like a laxative, purged the body politic of its waste products and criminals (Tomarken 1990, p. 92). Apocalyptic satires have recorded signs indicating the end of the world, including famine, diseases, catastrophes, wars and the movements of the Turks. Epidemics also created circumstances that were useful in testing people's morals. For example, Nathan Chytraeus's (1543–98) hexameter poem on the plague, *Contra pestem epistola satyrica* (1578), recorded the horrors in Rostock during a plague, showing how men's civility degenerated in a state of emergency. The plague as a mass disease released anarchic tendencies in the social order and disguised people's fundamental selfishness and animalistic natures in the same manner as, for example, Thucydides, who had described the effects of the plague in his *Peloponnesian War*. Chytraeus's poem disclosed the discrepancy between ideal humanity and social reality burgeoning with crowds of swine-like men (Kühlmann 1992; Kemper 1987, pp. 105–17).

Later Balde suggested in his *Medicinae gloria* (1651, *sat.* 3) that a sign of the golden age when Saturn reigned supreme was that there were no doctors and no need for their profession either, since diseases did not trouble men until Jupiter became an alcoholic; with this god's addiction and his subsequent hangover, the battalions of aches and diseases spread in the world. Consequently, men began to medicate themselves with different exotic drugs, such as asses' ears, whales' sperm, crocodiles' droppings, putrid liquor squeezed out of glow-worms, and frogs' entrails mixed with the rotten viscera of ravens. Balde pointed out that during the golden age men were satisfied with apples and water – simple and healthy nourishment that not only kept the doctor away, but also reflected men's unspoilt virtue. Modern hydrophobia was a pathological sign.³⁰ Balde's descriptions presumably derived from Seneca's claim (*Epistulae* 95.15–18) that degeneration manifested itself in the birth of complex and unaccountable diseases resulting from high living.

However, my focus is not on the social satire that addressed a plurality or entire societies, but on ethical satires that spoke to the individual patient and externalised his inner perversion in diseases. Although

Juvenal mentioned that the corruption of society spread like a plague and one bad apple spoils the bunch (2.78–81), in general the emphasis was on the wellbeing of each individual. The texts studied for this project can be called introspective in the sense that they emphasised a retreat within in the Stoic manner and self-examination as a way of finding true life. Aristotle (384–322 BC) noted in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1097a) in comparing ethics with medicine that a doctor cured individuals, and as in moral philosophy, the medical arguments in the Latin satires studied here concerned the health of a single person, not primarily of a community. Their means to cure were not to be sought from the outside, but in the patient's own moral improvement. As Cicero put it in his *Tusculanae disputationes* (3.3.6) when describing philosophy as a medical art of the soul, we must endeavour with all our strength to become capable of doctoring ourselves.

In the texts studied here, the patent symptoms of diseases and signs of imbalance in the patient's body were interpreted and treated as symptomatic of his hidden confusion. The internal disorder manifested itself in ulcers, nausea or a swollen and inflamed state that Cicero compared with the sick imbalance of anger (*Tusc.* 3.9.19). Among the favourite physical diseases and symptoms encountered in satires in general were queasiness in the stomach and indigestion (indicating luxury and other moral disorders), fever (representing passions) and gout (stemming from indulgence). The diseases were usually annoying and harmful (such as scabies or black bile); they tended to become chronic and were often incurable (such as gout), but were usually not directly lethal.³¹ The satirists maintained that such disorders never had strictly physical – or supernatural – causes, for the physical condition was part of a wider moral system. As Plutarch put it, “disease grows in the body through Nature, vice and depravity in the soul are first the soul's own doing, and then its affliction” (“Whether the affections of the soul are worse than those of the body”, *Moralia* 500C; trans. W. C. Helmbold). In all moral discourse it was always worse to be sick in soul than in body, but these conditions were interdependent.

Thus, in the satires studied here health and disease were considered in terms of balance and imbalance, as they were viewed in Hippocratic medicine. Although in the seventeenth century the body was perceived as a machine and sickness was explained as a form of mechanical breakdown, early modern Latin satires still maintained old ideas presented about disease in traditional humoral pathology and ancient philosophy. Disease was largely regarded as the outcome of poor diet, personal misbehaviour and faulty lifestyle.

In Stoic philosophy, passions and disturbances of the mind were connected with an unhealthy desire that never left a patient in peace once it attacked. Cicero quoted Ennius, saying that a sick soul never ceased to desire (*Tusc.* 3.3.5, *aeger* [...] *cupere numquam desinit*). Likewise in Roman satire, the sick soul suffered from insatiate hunger for luxury, excessive drinking, sexual abandon and feverish desire for fame and money. Medical discourse was used in this sense, for instance, in Horace's satire, where he equated human vices with mental illnesses and offered the traditional ancient medicament, the biggest dose of hellebore to the greedy (2.3.80–2). Greed and avarice were regarded as particularly persistent and hardened illnesses, which made the patient pursue women, wine or money, if there was no reason to settle and cure the desire. Horace noted that a man who suffered from fear or desire was unable to enjoy his wealth, because sore eyes have no pleasure from seeing beautiful pictures, nor aching ears from music (*Epistulae* 1.2.52–3). Cicero spoke about avarice, the keen desire for money, as being an evil that circulated in the veins and diseases ensued (*Tusc.* 4.11.24). Thus, the medicament needed to be given in large doses.

Desires that had become excessive were not addressed in satires as abstract appetites but literally and directly; the human body became the incarnation of vices, as in the old Attic comedy in which the parasite had been merely a belly or Terence's Gnatho was mere jaws. Satires centred the reader's attention on the glutton's swollen stomach, saliva adhering on the lips³² and his mouth opened wide to yawn (implying sloth) or to swallow large mouthfuls: "We lift wide our jaws and regale with grin and gape" (Lucilius 3, frg. 131; trans. E. H. Warmington). The word used here of the mouth is *rictus*, which is mainly applicable to wild animals. In his late fifteenth-century commentary on Horace's satires Christoforo Landino (1424–98) interpreted the open mouth either as a sign of avarice and vehement desire or of sick inertia and laziness (1486, *ad loc.* *Hor. sat.* 1.1.71). Gluttony and uncontrolled appetite for power were turned into concrete images in Seneca's moral discourse as well: Antonius was likened to a giant maw engulfing Pompey's property, and the contemporary world was likened to an all-consuming and swollen stomach (Gowers 1993, p. 19), which became an image of moral aberration in Roman satire. The word used for the stomach was often *abdomen*, more properly associated with pigs' stomachs and suggesting man's bestial qualities. Persius' poems in particular had a strong emphasis on physical images. In his verses bad poets prayed for a hundred mouths, tongues and throats with which to recite their bombastic verses more loudly (5.1–6); and the throat, a metaphor of avidity,

was used meaningfully in the plural (3.89, *fauces*), as was observed by Renaissance commentators (Britannicus 1613b, p. 76, *fauces [...] summum gulae, eaeque numero tantum plurali*).

Violent impulses were particularly suitable for moral discourse, which called for control of reason. Satires showed the consequences of the pathological condition in which the body led the mind. As Horace put it, “the body, / heavy from yesterday’s guzzling, drags down the soul / and nails to the earth a particle of the divine spirit” (*Sermones* 2.2.77–9; trans. Niall Rudd).³³ This condition when the soul was moist from too much drinking – as the scholiast explained the phrase – not only harmed its capabilities, but human beings also became slaves to their own unlimited appetites; their body parts were turned into autonomous entities that made constant demands and had a life of their own. Exhortations to free the mind from its slavery to the body were commonplace in Seneca’s moral epistles as well (14.2; 65.21).

Persius made a comment on random living by blaming a lazy student for neglecting to notice where his legs carried him (3.62). In the same way, in ancient philosophical discussions the empowering effect of intense passions, which took hold of men and carried them away, was sometimes compared to running legs, which cannot be controlled in the way that walking can (Braund and Gill 1997, p. 9). In Juvenal’s ironic words the starving stomach (*ventris furor*) forced the cannibal to gnaw his companion’s bones (15.100–2). In another passage the belly gone mad made independent decisions and swallowed the silverware, the cattle and finally, the whole farm in order to satiate itself (11.40–1). In the same way women’s insatiable sex organs forced them to continuous love-making against their will and without reasoning (6.129; Miller 1998, p. 265). With these hyperboles Juvenal underlined the need to take responsibility for one’s life and for the rational control of appetites based on physical requirements. In his *De medicina*, Celsus had also spoken ironically about people who, in justifying their desires, blamed their perfectly innocent stomachs, finding fault in the weakness of the stomach instead of in the will (1.8.2). The conclusion was that the body as such was not to be accused as being the primary source of delusion and appetites, but rather the mind, which did not control its desires, was the culprit.

Hidden wounds and symptomatic colours in Roman satire

Since the Roman satirists established the imagery of disease as an essential part of the satirical tradition, I will briefly deal with a few specific

pathological symptoms found in their verses. Medical motifs were important in constructing moral criticism in Roman satire, in which all physical symptoms conveyed moral values and were metonymical in the sense that they raised larger issues about the human condition. The body was nearly always discussed in negative terms (cf. Miller 1998), as a site for moral illnesses, and the condition was expressed in the language of pathology. Disease metaphors dominated Persius' first and third satires and showed up in several Horatian passages.³⁴ Medieval and Renaissance commentaries on Roman satire already paid critical attention to these terms and images, as well as to the concept of disease. In their commentary on Juvenal (first edition 1498), Antonius Mancinellus and Jodocus Badius Ascensius noted that *morbus* referred to the overall corrupted condition of the body, *aegrotatio* added infirmity to the disease, and *vitium* implied a discord in the agency of the body parts, which caused their deformity (1515, xix^v-xx^t). Johannes Britannicus mentioned in his commentary on Juvenal's satires (first edition 1501) that *morbus* was an acute infirmity of the body, whereas *vitium* was its permanent deficiency (1613a, p. 56).

One of the pervasive features of all satire is that it studies forms of deception and draws attention to pretense, hypocrisy, self-deception and other vices that have discrepancies between appearance and reality. As Juvenal noted, "never have faith in the front" (2.8).³⁵ Discrepancy was also revealed through the use of medical diagnostic terms: Horace memorably introduced Lucilius as the first "to draw back the glossy skin" when exposing pretensions of the rich and powerful (*Sermones* 2.1.64-5).³⁶ Satirists were expert examiners who sought to remove the white toga or the glossy skin, to see behind the deceptive appearances and reveal the rotteness and soreness within. Among the satirical metaphors developed from medical and physical terms, skin was one of the central images for a surface covering that disguised recesses and inner perversion (Bramble 1974, p. 153). The skin was often given such attributes as glossy, greasy, attractive and shining; these ironic qualifiers highlighted the false impression left by the outer appearance.³⁷ The same falsifying function was attributed to an oil-rub (4.33), which made the skin shine, and to suntan, since taking the sun was perceived as a vain attempt to hide the true colour: "What's your idea of the highest good? To dine for ever / among the flesh-pots and pamper your skin with regular sunshine?" (Persius 4.17-18; trans. Niall Rudd). A French philologist Nicolas Rigault (1571-1654), among others, observed in his commentary on Juvenal (10.192) that the word used for the skin was often *pellis* (instead of *cutis*), which means animal skin or the skin of a

corpse, thus further degrading the target (1684, *ad loc.*). Moreover, the word *pellis* was often used in conjunction with *intus* or *introrsum*, and the inside was defined as ugly or shameful (*turpis*), even though it glittered outwardly. The skin not only indicated “skin-deep”, but became a metaphor for basic character as well. Persius noted in his fifth satire how *pellicula* (a disparaging diminutive for skin), that is, the wrapping, once acquired was difficult to cast aside. People were born within the skin in which they remained throughout their satirical lives: “You retain / the skin of your old disguise and wear a glossy exterior / while keeping a cunning fox inside your vapid heart” (5.115–17; trans. Niall Rudd). The satirist, however, emphatically claimed to know “what you are underneath, in the skin” (Persius 3.30, *ego te intus et in cute novi*).³⁸

The bloated skin mentioned in Persius’ third satire (3.63) has often been understood in its technical sense, and scholars have claimed that it refers to dropsy, but it is needless to attempt to ascertain the cause and nature of such symptoms or discuss them in strictly technical terms.³⁹ They can instead be read as supporting the poetics of satire, which construed an opposition between the inside and the outside. Tumescence implied that something ill was hiding inside and developing secretly to the point that it was nearly bursting out for everyone to see; “your flesh is already sick and bloated” (Persius 3.63; trans. Niall Rudd). Skin concretely covered illnesses, which then manifest symptoms on the surface: black bile accumulated in the chest, the body swelled and augured a coming attack (Persius 5.144–5). Swellings were also openly moral symptoms, suggesting ostentation, arrogance, self-importance and other disorders of the mind described by the satirists. Sometimes the swollen state was more specifically defined as madness or rage according to the humour (black bile) that caused the tumescence. For Cicero, tumescence implied perturbations of the soul, such as sadness or anger, whereas the wise man’s soul never swelled with such passions (*Tusc.* 3.9.19).

Other symptoms referring to the sore inside were also diagnosed: for example, the patient’s foul breath signalled internal disease. Breath (Gr. *pneuma*) was, in Hippocratic medicine, a central concept, and health was defined as the result of its free flow, whereas diseases accrued from the difficulty of digestion and the impeded passage of the *pneuma*. The breaths rising from undigested food were described as unhealthy vapours that caused diseases (Tieleman 2003, p. 195). Seneca too noted the significance of yesterday’s fumes and belches: they indicated that the food and presumably the man were both rotting (*Epistulae* 95.25). These medico-philosophical views were shared by the satirists: Lucilius

(3, frg. 130) and Persius (3.99) both referred to sour belches arising from the chest,⁴⁰ and the patient was short of breath in Persius' satire, presumably because his heavy burden of sins made breathing freely difficult (3.89). The words *gravis halitus* referred to a bad and ominous smell. The famous passage (3.88–103) gave a vivid image of a dying man who had over-indulged in sensual pleasures. To sooth the initial symptoms (chest palpitations, sore throat and difficult breathing), the man requested a smooth Surrentine wine to drink, but the medicine only exacerbated his condition. A similar passage was found in Juvenal's first satire (1.140–6), which described a sick gourmand who failed to digest huge amounts of boar and peacock meat; a heart attack struck like lightning.

These examples suggested that the real reason for the various symptoms lay in the internal condition. The philosophers had emphasised that if illness found a place in the inner body, the more severe and inveterate it would become. In his *Epistles*, Seneca described how luxurious habits gradually penetrated the sinews of the body. The worst evil afflicting people was not external, but was situated in their very vitals and difficult to discern or cure (114.25). Cicero also claimed that the feverish excitement of the soul settles in the veins and marrows and thus becomes a chronic disease (*Tusc.* 4.10.24). Persius noted that people should therefore take care of themselves in the early stages of a disease (3.64, *venienti occurrere morbo*), before their case was hopeless; otherwise medicine would need to be particularly strong to reach the internal organs.⁴¹ Likewise, it was necessary to realise first that one was sick in order to attain soundness. Therefore, Seneca repeatedly claimed the moralist's need to see (*inspicere*) vices and internal corruption underlying an attractive surface (*Epistulae* 115.9).

In the representation of internal evils, the image of the hidden wound was frequently used. It was a concrete and ominous detail that marked the patient, and its soreness emphasised the pain that a latent illness must cause its bearer. The wound image was used in social and political contexts to denote a corrupt society; different passions were also viewed as ulcerous sores in the self.⁴² Juvenal used the wound metaphor specifically to represent hatred, "a wound that can never heal" (15.34; trans. Peter Green). Enduring a painful wound was also used to illustrate self-discipline, virtue and bravery. Enduring pain made men examples of self-mastery and, in Cicero's view, of Roman heroism and Stoic fortitude.⁴³ The rhetoric of military asceticism renounced pleasure and languishing in luxury and spoke instead for the hardening of the self for the rigours of life – these being represented by the image of wounds.

However, in satires the wound represented a significantly different image. It was a sign of inflammatory erosion, where healthy material was gradually reduced to rotten and putrefying flesh. In comparison with an epic, where heroes inflicted clear wounds on each other as they struggled for honour, in satires wounds were not caused by blows or cutting weapons, but arose internally. They were abscesses and boils that did not arise from heroic qualities or bestow fame; their relationship to honour was the reverse. Likewise, Seneca talked about internal sores in terms of abscesses and ulcers that were deep within his breast (68.8).⁴⁴ As in medicine, the violence and the site of the disease were crucial. In Persius' third satire, which was held together by a disease metaphor, the satirist examined his patient, a reluctant young student of philosophy who appeared superficially healthy (his pulse was steady and there were no signs of fever). But when asked to open his mouth, the patient revealed a nasty "septic ulcer at the back" (3.113–14, *latet ulcus in ore / putre*). The expression gained almost proverbial power; in form it resembled Virgil's famous saying, *latet anguis in herba*, which also referred to a latent and hidden evil (*Eclogae* 3.93). Moreover, the wound was purulent and signalled the young man's rotten condition. Again, in comparison to Seneca's words in *Consolatio ad Marciam* (1.8), wounds were easy to heal if they were still fresh. But when they hardened and had festered, they had to be cauterised, opened up and violently crushed. According to Celsus' *De medicina* as well, ulcers that passed down into the throat were dangerous, especially to children, and recovery was difficult (6.11.3). The technical verb *inspicere* used twice by Persius for the doctor's conduct (3.88–9) recalled diagnostic language; the doctor literally looked in. The inner wound was visible only to the satirist, who had the means to peer deep into the soul of the patient and then display the corporeal scene for others to see.

The wound image recurred in Persius' fourth satire (4.43–5). This time it was in the groin and covered by a broad golden belt. Here the deceptive discrepancy between the internal character and the outer appearance was highlighted by the wound's gold covering, just as inner weaknesses were often covered over by fame, money or other glittering things that put up a false front. Horace also censured the habit of fools hiding open wounds instead of discussing them with a doctor and seeking a cure (*Epistulae* 1.16.24, *stultorum incurata pudor malus ulcera celat*). Plutarch noted that inward ugliness was too often concealed as if it were an ulcerous sore; the moral progress of such a man was not likely to be significant. As a model worth emulating, Plutarch named Hippocrates the physician, who publicised his own error and failure to apprehend

the facts about cranial sutures (“How a man may become aware of his progress in virtue”, *Moralia* 82B–E). Similar openness in confessing and announcing one’s own mistakes and shortcomings, instead of concealing them, was also expected from other human beings. The same advice was given by Philosophy in Boethius’s *De consolatione philosophiae* (I.4.1, *Si operam medicantis exspectas, oportet vulnus detegas*).

A hidden wound as a symbol of inner weakness revealed by the physician-satirist was also found in Juvenal’s sixth satire, which has been regarded as a quasi-medical text, *remedia uxorationis*, intended to cure Postumus, who was getting married (Wilson & Makowski 1990, p. 29). The poem described a woman who carefully made up her face with cosmetics (*medicamina*) that only created a deceptive mask: “But all these medicaments and various treatments [...] make you wonder what’s underneath, a face or an ulcer” (6.471–3; trans. Peter Green). The phrase “a face or a wound” (*facies dicitur an ulcus*) epitomised the essential satirical contrast between the apparent (for the face was the body part usually visible to others) and the real.⁴⁵ The final position of the word *ulcus* underlined that in order to see the true essence one had to dig deeper. In Juvenal’s second satire (2.11–13), the physician-satirist showed similar visual acuity. He examined the shaven lower parts of a man who had concealed his homosexuality under a virile and bearded (and thus philosophical) appearance. Although the visible parts left an impression of a real man full of vigour – symbolised by the shaggy hair, just like the mythical heroes Heracles and Polyphemus – the patient had a hidden physical condition, haemorrhoids, in the secret area of the anus.⁴⁶ This condition resulted from anal sex, as the physician laughingly discovered before he began to burn the haemorrhoids away. Thus, there was hardly any private sanctum into which the satirist’s gaze did not penetrate to uncover the hidden nature of human beings. By looking into the sore and private corners of his patient, the satirist uncovered hidden blemishes and exposed them for everyone to see and censure. In addition to exercising their power in this way, satirists liked to think of themselves as transgressors of conventional boundaries, with the skin marking a critical border that they crossed. The wise man himself was, of course, invulnerable.

Paleness was another common symptom that clearly indicated some latent illness that insidiously gnawed and tormented the body and anticipated an approaching condition of lifelessness. According to medical literature, paleness often resulted from some infirmity in the stomach (Celsus, *De medicina* 1.8.2). In Horace’s satires, the reason for paleness was attributed to over-eating: a man was “pale and bloated

from gluttony” and after a heavy meal, sticky phlegm rebelled in the green-looking diner’s interior (2.2.21, 75–7). In Persius’ satires as well, the words *pallor* and *pallere* frequently appeared as bad omens of forthcoming sickness and indicators of general indisposition.⁴⁷ For example, the man who died while bathing after an undigested meal had a white stomach (3.98, *albus venter*).⁴⁸ A memorable example of paleness was also found in Juvenal’s first satire, where a man earning his inheritance in a rich matron’s bed “looks as pale as the man who steps barefoot on a snake” (1.43; trans. Peter Green); here paleness indicated sexual excess and the young man’s reluctance to perform this labour. Often passions and disorders, such as a bad conscience, fear or love-sickness, appeared on the human surface as pallor (Bramble 1974, pp. 148–51). Money and the worries it induced were represented by cool colours, too: Horace used the verb *pallere* in his accounts of the curse of ambition and the morbid love of money (*Sermones* 2.3.78). Persius’ satires used the same word with an explicit reference to money and avidity (4.47, *viso si palles, improbe, nummo*). Cornutus noted in Persius’ satires that the satirist himself was trained to scrape away pale (that is, sick) behaviour (5.15).

Thus, a pale physical appearance was a qualitative symptom and involuntary manifestation that once again reflected and indicated the inner condition. It was not a mere physical reaction, but also a cognitive and moral symptom related to the patient’s moral character. Horace defined pallor further as guiltiness (*Epistulae* 1.1.61, *pallescere culpa*). In addition to foretelling a poor prognosis, it reminded of the patient’s past actions: it was a later-symptom that succeeded some offence or crime that the person had committed. It was the colour of fear and the accused and stemmed from shameful deeds and their coming to consciousness (cf. Martial, *Epigrammata* 2.24, *pallidiorque reo*, “paler than the accused”). Juvenal described how guilty men “blanch and tremble at every lightning-flash”, referring to guilt, which made people regard every bad symptom as a punishment sent by the gods (13.223, 229–32).

Juvenal also mentioned sweating – the alteration between cold and warm, fear and shame – as a physical symptom of guilt (1.166–7); Rigault interpreted the alteration as signifying a bad conscience (1684, *ad loc*).⁴⁹ The author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* already noted that our changing colours, paleness and blushing, are symptomatic of our conscience and attend either guilt or innocence (2.5.8).⁵⁰ Plutarch also argued that man’s body was affected by the impulses of his passions and this “is proved by his paleness and blushing” (“On moral virtue”, *Moralia* 451A; trans. W. C. Helmbold). He illuminated the knowledge of one’s dreadful

deeds and personal errors by the image of an ulcer as well, saying that bad conscience “leaves behind it in the soul regret which ever continues to wound and prick it” (“On tranquillity of mind”, *Moralia* 476F; trans. W. C. Helmbold). Regret together with shame were persistent ulcers, since they were caused by reason that chastised itself in the feeling of disgrace.

The change of colour was usually seen on the face, that is, the site attacked by the satirists. Hippocratic medicine, for example, advised to pay special attention to the patient’s facial appearance and look for any changes produced in the face by long or severe sickness. This pathological *facies Hippocratica* was characterised, for example, by sunken eyes and cold ears.⁵¹ However, the image of inside paleness offered by Persius pointed directly to the real site of the disease (3.42–3, *intus / palleat infelix*). Blushing and paleness spread on the face but, in Seneca’s words, these conditions in fact arose from the depths (*Epistulae* 11.1). In the sense of moral guilt, the symptom of paleness was so common that Martial constructed a paradox with it. In Martial’s epigram (1.77), Charinus was chronically pale, although he was healthy, drank moderately and had good digestion. Still, paleness indicated moral defects, for Charinus was pale even after having rouged his skin and while licking someone’s ass. The point was that he did not know how to blush, that is, he was not innocent.

It is thus important to observe how medical terms were used in constructing moral criticism in Roman verse satire. Medical terms and the analogy between diseases and vices were used in ancient moral criticism to the extent that in Horace’s satire (2.3) such discourse was ironically placed in the mouth of a funny convert, the Stoic Damasippus. In another passage (2.4), Horace played on the conventional didacticism by offering a parody of gastronomic lectures for healthy living. Nevertheless, medical images became a firm and conventional part of the tradition. In the later literature the arguments against bad living were often taken from Roman satire and its images of wounds and paleness recurred, for example, in Renaissance poetics and in satires written against drunkenness and other vices.

Changing traditions: from rotten insides to disease encomia

In the tradition of Latin satire diseases were often emblems of the human immoral condition. In Chapter 2, the focus is on poetics and the reception of Roman verse satire, including late fifteenth- to early

seventeenth-century poetics and other discussions of the genre, which repeatedly applied the medical analogy to characterise satire and emphasise its healing function. But in my work as well as in the Latin satirical tradition diseases were at times also more positively assessed. In Chapter 3, “Painfully Happy”, I endeavour to broaden the view of satirical moral criticism by focusing on early modern disease eulogies, which were produced especially in Germany, Italy, France and the Netherlands. In these texts, harmful diseases and physical deformities were no longer represented in terms of imbalance or confusion of the mind, but instead were praised as useful, beneficial and even beautiful. In her *The Smile of Truth* (1990) Annette H. Tomarken has illuminated the multifaceted satirical encomium with emphasis on the sixteenth-century French tradition, and in his *Scholar’s Bedlam* (1995) W. Scott Blanchard has identified the mock encomium as an enormously popular rhetorical form and an important subgenre of Renaissance Menippean satire (pp. 15–16). However, in her work on Neo-Latin Menippean satire, Ingrid De Smet (1996, pp. 74–5) argues that the paradoxical encomium does not belong to the genre of Menippean satire, since it is non-narrative and does not have a plot structure. Instead, it must be seen as a form of epideictic oratory. If we agree with her strict definition, then the early modern eulogies of fever, gout and the itch studied here – as being non-narrative prose works and essays without any fantastic setting or prosimetrum – do not belong to Menippean satire. But on the other hand their playfulness and lightness of touch when dealing with moral and philosophical issues and their frequent use of paradoxes clearly connect them to the Menippean traditions.

In such eulogies, the conventional assumptions about disease were questioned by redefining the concept. In his *Podagrae encomium* (c. 1546), Girolamo Cardano (Hieronymus Cardanus, 1501–76), who held the chair of medicine in Pavia, argued that gout was a disease only if disease were defined in terms of pain, but not if the prerequisites for something being a disease were mental and physical languor, folly, desire, lack of awareness of the human condition, anger or sadness (1619, p. 218). For Cardano, the gravest diseases were those of the mind. But the negativity of disease was also questioned by claiming that many renowned poets and intellectuals had suffered from different diseases: Virgil from melancholy, Lucretius from insanity, Ovid from stupidity (!) and Horace from inebriation – and yet they had been famous and productive men. Besides, man’s divine origin became visible when he was ill: he was able to foresee the future, contemplate serious matters and be free of the perturbations of the mind. Even incurable diseases, which for Seneca

had been a sufficient justification for suicide (Colish 1985, p. 49), were viewed as a benefit that greatly increased the quality of life. The patient who was forced to stay at home could devote himself to private study and agreeable detachment. He was forcibly alienated from physical passions and vanities that normally surrounded him in his daily life and that diverted him from the good and gradually led to vice.

The paradoxical encomium spread widely as an oral and literary genre in the Renaissance, culminating in Erasmus's *Encomium moriae* and continuing well into the later seventeenth century. Lucian's satirical dialogues and praises of a parasite, of a fly and of gout were important in disseminating the tradition (Marsh 1998; Robinson 1979). During seventeenth-century polyhistorism, everything in nature was thought to be full of the wonder of divine creation, and the largest anthologies of paradoxical encomia emerged during that century. The most extensive anthology was Caspar Dornau's (1577–1631) *Amphitheatrum sapientiae Socraticae joco-seriae* in two volumes (1619). Dornau's compilation includes hundreds of praises and shorter descriptions excerpted from larger works. Not all of these are paradoxical or satirical texts, but it also included serious praises and non-literary, medico-botanical studies of diseases, plants and animals. Dornau explained the mention of Socrates' name in his title as a reference to a playful way of philosophising and questioning false opinions, which often had recourse to praises of things that the multitude held as being of little value (Seidel 1994, p. 350; Tomarken 1990, pp. 51–2). The second volume by Dornau – who himself was a medical doctor and a philosopher – assembles praises of vices and diseases discussed below, including fever, gout and blindness.⁵² Shorter but equally popular and often reprinted collections were, for example, *Facetiae facetiarum* (1615); *Nugae venales* (1642); *Dissertationum ludicarum et amoenitatum scriptores varii* (1644) and *Admiranda rerum admirabilium encomia* (1666). The latter contained nearly thirty playful eulogies of animals and diseases (cf. Appendix).

I will examine how the disease encomia relied on philosophical and Stoic ideas about pain, suffering and disease and how these philosophical discussions were structured in the satirical paradox form. By this approach, I wish to enhance understanding of the suggested philosophical and medical aspects of satirical criticism.

Chapter 4, “Wonderfully Unaware”, continues with satirical Neo-Latin disease eulogies but focuses especially on physical features that somehow affect the intellect, namely, the sensory disabilities of blindness and deafness, and somnolence. These eulogies were often consolatory, dedicated to friends (formerly) active in politics or in education

and now suffering from some chronic disability, and meant to comfort them and furnish strength in their suffering. Satirical playfulness, consolatory rhetoric and philosophical wisdom were combined here. In philosophical literature, the *consolatio* was considered a vehicle for therapy of the emotions; hence, the consolation has been called “the paradigmatic instance of the therapeutic mode of philosophising” (Wilson 1997, p. 48). Likewise, the eulogies playfully reminded one that for a wise and virtuous man contentment was possible in any circumstances. Authors like Jacob Guthier (1568–1638) alleged that the opinion of Everyman about blindness being a misfortune was misleading, since wisdom did not require eyes if the mind was illuminated nor did the disability deprive men of anything essential to their happiness. On the contrary, blindness and deafness protected men from the evils of the world. The suffering body was no longer a negative affliction of the soul, a burden or a necessity that connected the human being to the animal world, thereby necessarily separating him from the divine spheres, but rather a physical ailment paradoxically released the soul from its chains. All the texts examined here are from the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries, including the eulogies on blindness by Jacob Guthier, Jean Passerat and Erycius Puteanus, the little-known praise of deafness by Marten Schoock and the praise of somnolence by Christoph Hegendorff. These texts were also often reprinted in the playful Renaissance anthologies of ironic encomia. In the fourth chapter I will also deal briefly with drunkenness, one of the most popular vices in Renaissance satires. In Roman satire wine never scattered troubles or gave consolation to or relief from suffering, as it did in convivial poetry. Rather it was a motif that reminded humans of their mortality in a different way, not by encouraging them to take pleasure in the moment, but by showing how drinkers lost their health and were no longer able to seize the moment, even if they wanted to. But in the Renaissance encomia drunkenness was now also welcomed as being conducive to the overall sanity of the body and the mind.

The final chapter of this book, “Outlook and Virtue,” further illuminates the use of medical and physiological images in Latin satire by focusing on descriptions of hilariously imaginary illnesses and various forms of physical ugliness. It shows how very different physical functions and peculiarities acquired moral qualities. Thus, it dwells on a playful speech about dwarfs (by Albert Wichgreve) and on poems about the morally acceptable outlook of virtuous and intellectual men, including the characteristics of extreme thinness and ugliness of philosophers and poets (in Balde’s satirical poetry). The physical deformity that generally

provided material for making jokes was now extolled as useful and beautiful. The chapter also deals with a number of pseudo-scientific mock dissertations and treatises on imaginary venereal diseases of first-year university students, *beani* and *pennales*, and considers theses on unusual ailments that turned young men into rabbits (*De hasione*). These texts took their inspiration from student humour and learned university discussions. Mock dissertations followed the usual structure of academic disputation and its devices of pedantry, listing, categorising and quoting authorities, but instead of analysing serious scientific issues, these dissertations were full of vulgar, scatological jokes and dealt with something commonly regarded as trivial or vicious, such as sexual abandon or the intriguing question of whether “a fart had a corporeal or a spiritual basis”. The treatment of such afflictions was harsh and violent, and in addition to the conventional hellebore, more imaginary medicaments, heavy drinking or flatulent dishes were recommended. It is also worthy of note that sometimes the patients were Stoic philosophers and intellectuals, authorities otherwise held in esteem in moral satire.

The purpose of this final chapter is to show how different and even eccentric physical features could be morally interpreted. It also offers an appreciation of the variety of Neo-Latin satire and its carnivalistic and morally ambiguous tendencies. Pseudo-scientific treatises or anatomies of a medical topic are an important and sometimes neglected part of the tradition. Günter Hess, for example, in his otherwise thorough study of German Renaissance literature of folly, saw that the sixteenth-century *facetiae* collections marked a degeneration of satire and a trivialisation of its comic devices (1971, pp. 240–1). His assessment does not do full justice to the texts that may not be refined in humour but nevertheless were frequently reprinted and thus apparently were popular reading among academic youth. These satires reacted playfully to their former moral criticism, reusing traditional satirical images and calling into question moral stereotypes that had earlier been advocated as valuable. By vividly describing moral failings such as diseases but without any moralistic instruction, these texts also parodied the earlier satirical tradition and its preaching tone and amused the audience rather than communicating doctrine or stabilising values. Thus these texts can be seen as representing the traditions of Menippean satire, which makes jokes at the expense of learning and calls into question all value systems, philosophical doctrines and the moral certainties of verse satire. Disease images were transformed to serve mere amusement or the criticism of morally critical discourse itself.

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