

PHILODEMUS ON THE THERAPY OF VICE

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PHILODEMUS OF GADARA (c.110–c.40 BC), the Greek Epicurean philosopher, migrated to Italy at a relatively early age, placed himself under the patronage of the Roman patrician Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, and founded a flourishing Epicurean community at Herculaneum. He is a near contemporary of Cicero, Lucretius, Virgil, and Horace and, although the nature and extent of his influence on each of these authors is a matter of ongoing discussion, there is significant evidence that he was known to most of them, both in person and through his writings. Fragments of his works, which survive in the charred papyri of the so-called Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum, show him to be an intellectual of impressive range and talent. His elegant epigrams circulated from Italy to Roman Egypt, while his prose compositions targeted smaller and varying audiences. Their subjects include poetics and literary theory, literary criticism, aesthetics, rhetoric, poetic theology, and philosophy of religion, as well as logic, epistemology, philosophical psychology, and ethics. In all these domains, Philodemus has much to contribute to the discussions of the ancients, as well as to our own.

In the present paper I shall concentrate on Philodemus' moral thought, and in particular on his discussion of vice and its therapy. Not only do these constitute the object of his multi-volume composition *On Vices and the Opposite Virtues* . . . , they also occupy pride of place in his treatises concerning emotions and ways of life, and are extensively discussed in his more general works [*On Choices and Avoidances*] (a conjectural title) and *On Epicurus*. It is not surprising, then, that an increasing number of studies in

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recent years have been dedicated to Philodemus' treatment of individual vices and emotions and, in particular, to the methods of curing them.¹ However, no systematic work has been done on the actual concept of vice, or on the author's criteria for focusing his analysis on some vices but not others. In fact, most scholars appear to assume that Philodemus operates with an intuitive conception of vice mostly stemming from ordinary morality, and also that he selects the individual vices under discussion more or less at random.² Moreover, they consider that the cure of vice is effected by means of one chief therapeutic technique, namely frank speech, *parrhēsia*. This, it has been maintained, should be understood along the lines of the medical analogy, applied as literally as possible.

My aim is to offer a more complex picture of Philodemus' approach to vice and of the therapeutic devices that he proposes. In the first part I shall maintain that his account of vice is fairly systematic: he explains what should count as vice, determines its individuating characteristics, maps out the complex relationships between the various vices, and shows the importance of this topic for practical ethics. In the second part I shall suggest that the choice of certain vicious states over others as the focus of analysis and therapy is effected according to a variety of criteria internal to Philodemus' system and marking his own ethical viewpoint. In the third part I shall give an account of frank speech, *parrhēsia*, as well as of other therapeutic strategies, and shall try to explain precisely how they achieve their results.³

¹ Seminal discussions bearing on topics in Philodemian ethics are found, for example, in J. Annas, 'Epicurean Emotions', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 30/2 (1989), 145–64, and *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford, 1993); E. Asmis, 'Philodemus' Epicureanism', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, 11.36.4 (Berlin and New York, 1990), 2369–406; D. Clay, *Paradosis and Survival: Three Chapters in the History of Epicurean Philosophy* (Ann Arbor, 1998); the introductions to the English translations of Philodemus' treatises *On Anger* and *On Death* by D. Armstrong (unpublished manuscripts); A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1987); M. Gigante, 'Philosophia Medicans in Filodemo', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 5 (1975), 53–61, and *Ricerche filodemee*, 2nd edn. (Naples, 1983); C. Natali, 'Oikonomia in Hellenistic Political Thought', in A. Laks and M. Schofield (eds.), *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1995), 95–128; M. C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (Princeton, 1994); and the introduction and comments of D. Obbink, *Philodemus On Piety, Part I* (Oxford, 1996).

² Alternatively, the assumption might be that Philodemus is treating every item which, according to his view, qualifies as a vice.

³ Below are listed the works by Philodemus which I intend to discuss, with details of the editions and translations that I follow. Regarding Philodemus' multi-volume

I

Arrogance, envy, joy at the misfortunes of others, flattery, greed, egocentrism, ingratitude and friendlessness, injustice, irascibility, and superstitious fears are, according to Philodemus, the chief internal conditions leading to evil actions. Related to them are vices such as self-conceit, stubbornness, and overconfidence; harshness, misanthropy, lack of proper dignity, and pride; suspicion and vanity;

work *On Vices and their Opposite Virtues* . . . (= *De vit.*), its surviving fragments are found in several papyri and belong to three separate books, 1, 9, and 10. The fragments of book 1 *On Flattery* (= *De adul.*) are edited by V. De Falco, 'Appunti sul Perikolakeias di Filodemo. pap. erc. 1675', *Rivista indo-greca-italica*, 10 (1926), 15–26; E. Kondo, 'Per l'interpretazione del pensiero filodemeo sulla adulazione nel PHerc. 1457', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 4 (1974), 43–56; M. Gigante and G. Indelli, 'Bione e l'epicureismo', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 8 (1978), 126–31; T. Gargiulo, 'PHerc. 222: Filodemo sull'adulazione', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 11 (1981), 103–27; and E. Acosta Mendez, 'PHerc. 1089: Filodemo "Sobre la Adulación"', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 13 (1983), 121–38. For book 9, *On Property Management* (= *De oec.*), I use the edition by C. Jensen, *Philodemi Peri Oikonomias Qui Dicitur Libellus* (Leipzig, 1907), provisionally revised by D. Delattre and myself, and also my own translation of the work forthcoming from the Society for Biblical Literature (Atlanta, Ga.). References to *De vit.* book 10, *On Arrogance* (= *De sup.*) are based on the edition by C. Jensen, *Philodemi Peri Kakion Liber Decimus* (Leipzig, 1911), provisionally revised by D. Delattre and myself, and also on my translation of the treatise to be published by the Society for Biblical Literature (Atlanta, Ga.). Moving on to other treatises, the anonymous work commonly known as the 'Comparetti Ethics' ('L'etica Comparetti') was probably composed by Philodemus and is edited by G. Indelli and V. Tsouna McKirahan, [*On Choices and Avoidances*] (= *De elect.*) (Naples, 1995). *On Epicurus* (= *De Epic.*) is edited by A. Tepedino Guerra, 'L'opera filodemea "Su Epicuro"', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 24 (1994), 5–53. Also, *On Wealth* (= *De div.*) is edited by A. Tepedino Guerra, 'Il primo libro "Sulla ricchezza" di Filodemo', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 8 (1978), 52–95. For the treatise *On Frank Speech* (= *De lib. dic.*) I consult the edition of A. Olivieri, *Philodemi Peri Parrhesias Libellus* (Leipzig, 1914), with emendations by Gigante, *Ricerche filodemeae*, 55–113. I also use the recent edition and translation by D. Konstan *et al.*, *Philodemus On Frank Criticism* (Society for Biblical Literature; Atlanta, Ga., 1998). References to *On Envy* (= *De inv.*) are based on A. Tepedino Guerra, 'Il PHerc. 1678: Filodemo sull'invidia?', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 15 (1985), 113–25. *On Gratitude* (= *De grat.*) is edited by A. Tepedino Guerra, 'Filodemo sulla gratitudine', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 7 (1977), 96–113. The fragments of *On Conversation* (= *De conv.*) are edited by F. Amoroso, 'Filodemo sulla conversazione', *Cronache ercolanesi*, 5 (1975), 63–76. For the treatise *On Death* (= *De morte*) I use the editions by T. Kuiper, *Philodemus Over den Dood* (Amsterdam, 1925), and by M. Gigante, 'L'inizio del quarto libro "Della morte" di Filodemo', *Ricerche filodemeae*, 116–61, and 'La chiusa del quarto libro "Della morte" di Filodemo', *ibid.* 163–234; I have also consulted the translation of the work by D. Armstrong (unpublished). For the writing *On Anger* (= *De ira*) I refer to the edition by G. Indelli, *Filodemo: L'ira* (Naples, 1988), and have also consulted D. Armstrong's translation and notes (unpublished).

insecurity and insolence; and inordinate attachment to externals, as well as excessive susceptibility to pain and toil. These and other similar conditions have both mental and physical features as their constitutive parts.

All vices have cognitive aspects, defined either in terms of components or, at least, in terms of necessary conditions for their occurrence. In conformity to Epicurean tradition, Philodemus specifies them as clusters of empty beliefs which must be addressed and corrected if the relevant vices are ever to be cured. So, the arrogant person *believes* that he is himself an expert in every matter, that he stands in no need of advice, etc. Someone susceptible to flattery is *convinced* that he truly possesses the virtues for which he is being flattered. Lack of good will comes from the *belief* that external goods are more valuable than friendship, and ingratitude partly derives from the *assumption* that favours are never rendered in a disinterested spirit.⁴ Rage and the thirst for revenge are incited by empty beliefs (*ψευδοδοξία*) regarding the intentional nature of the harm suffered, the magnitude of the damage, and the rightfulness of the revenge.⁵ As to the fear of death, it is based on a variety of false beliefs. Some of them are about the nature of the gods, of the soul, and of death, others about the nature and limits of pleasure, yet others about after-death life and punishment.⁶

Philodemus' analysis of these cases is that of a moderate cognitivist. It implies at least the weaker thesis that false and disturbing beliefs, assumptions, or presuppositions are the main sources or causes or grounds of vicious states. However, at times he seems to me to espouse a stronger form of cognitivism according to which empty beliefs are principal constituents of the vices under examination. His discussion then suggests that, in a sense, arrogance *is*

⁴ At the basis of envy too we find *false beliefs* regarding the value of external goods. As to joy at other people's misfortunes, this most bestial and savage vice, it is nourished by the empty *conviction* that it is rightful to feel glad at the disasters befalling bad men.

⁵ For example, Achilles gets enraged 'at some giver of feasts' (*De ira* XVIII. 18–20) in the belief that he has been truly and greatly wronged. Indeed, all irascible men tend to overestimate the nature of the offence done to them. And also, they often invent reasons why one would have wished to harm them and consequently interpret any damage done to them as intentional or voluntary.

⁶ For instance, we believe that we shall feel pain at the moment of death or that it will deprive us of the goods and pleasure of life. We grieve at the thought that our death does not occur in the proper time, place, and manner. We feel anxiety at thoughts concerning the perpetuation of our name, the disposal of our property, and so on.

the belief in your superiority with regard to everybody else; envy *is* the conviction that it is you, not your neighbour, that should possess power and wealth; and joy at the disasters befalling others (*epichairekakia*) can be *identified* with the belief that they got precisely what they deserved.

Whether Philodemus is interpreted as a stronger or a milder cognitivist, his account entails that there are *also* aspects of vice which are radically different from beliefs and indeed from any cognitive state. These have to do with the emotions marking individual manifestations of various vices, more specifically with the ways in which vice ‘feels’ to the person ridden by it.⁷ What is the nature of these feelings? Philodemus systematically explores that question with regard to anger, and his answer, I suggest, is meant to apply to other emotions as well. Anger’s most striking feature is that it is intrinsically painful. Philodemus makes this point by providing an elaborate symptomatology of anger, amounting to a vivid picture of intense physical suffering.⁸ Mental agony, which may or may not have physical counterparts, also marks all vicious emotions. For instance, it is present in various expressions of the fear of death. As superstition, the fear of death is worrying on account of the hereafter (*De elect.* VII. 15–18, IX. 13–20, X. 16–18, XVIII. 4–19). As financial insecurity and greed, it occupies the mind night and day (*De elect.* XIX. 12–16, XX. 6–8, 11–13; *De morte* XXXVIII. 36–7); as anxiety concerning the perpetuation of the self, it fills us with grief, regrets, frustration, and repulsion (*De morte* XXII. 9–XXXVI. 37).⁹

Additional characteristics, further determining the nature of vicious emotions, are their duration and intensity as well as their peculiar quality. Again, the paradigm case is anger, and in particular

⁷ The most fundamental emotions pervading vice are anger and fear, which are related to, and typically appear together with, groups of further emotions. Such are the feelings of insecurity of the arrogant man, expressed by his need to be admired and elevated at the expense of others; the joy that the *epichairekakos* experiences at other people’s pains; the feelings of malice and hatred marking both envy and flattery; and the anxieties following upon superstition and greed.

⁸ The angry man has flashing in his eyes, blood in his cheeks, a tense neck, swelling veins, and a bitter mouth (*De ira* fr. 6. 3–20); he lies in bed with his soul torn (*De ira* X. 29–30), leaps up, runs out naked (*De ira* X. 22), falls upon wood and walls or pokes out his eyes (*De ira* XIII. 14–17). His whole being turns bitter (*κακοδαμονική πικρία*: *De ira* XXVI. 13–14), fills with fear, agony, and turmoil (*De ira* XXVI. 13–16). As to his thirst for revenge, especially when it remains unsatisfied, it can cause pain so excruciating that he may even kill himself.

⁹ Mental suffering is also inherent in envy and (although perhaps this is less obvious) in vicious conditions such as arrogance, ingratitude, and even flattery.

the distinction that the philosopher draws between natural anger, *ὀργή*, and unnatural rage, *θυμός* (*De ira* XXXVII. 20–XLVI. 13). Philodemus claims that, in contrast to natural anger, which is experienced only briefly and only in moderation (XLV. 5–15), rage is prolonged in time and has the tendency to escalate. Also, there seems to be a difference in their quality (*ποιότης*: *De ira* XLV. 35), i.e. in the way they ‘feel’ to us. One reason why we experience *ὀργή* as a *feeling* different in quality from *θυμός* is, precisely, that it is less prolonged and less violent.¹⁰

Now, the fact that Philodemus focuses on individual exemplifications of various vices, as well as the comparison of his treatment to that of empirical medicine, might lead us to believe that he conceives of vice solely in terms of individual episodes. I disagree with that view. The evidence strongly suggests that vice, according to him, is ultimately a matter of disposition and hence a relatively stable and permanent psychic condition. Indeed, he makes a real effort to preserve the distinction between a vicious disposition and given manifestations of it, and also to outline connections between these two. Thus, the ‘slices of life’, as it were, representing the feelings and behaviour of the enraged man on particular occasions derive from ‘a merciless and harsh disposition . . . of all diseases the most destructive’ (*De ira* XXVII. 19–22). Similar claims hold for other vices as well.¹¹

Violent motions and evil dispositional traits are often combined in complex blends of vices. Each blend constitutes a recognizable type instantiated in the corresponding ‘character’, and each is denoted by a name capturing the essential features of the blend in

¹⁰ We should notice however, that the *main* difference between the two lies in their *cognitive* elements. This is apparent even at the level of semantics, since unnatural anger is also called ‘empty anger’ (*κενή ὀργή*: *De ira* XXXVIII. 1) on account of the beliefs involved in it.

¹¹ The arrogant man is not someone who, for once, got a bit above himself and treated us in a high-handed way, but rather someone who has firmly assumed an attitude of superiority and disdain with regard to others. A flatterer is not a person who occasionally succumbs to the desire to please and hence shows himself less truthful than usual, but rather a scoundrel exercising that detestable practice systematically and out of self-interested motives. Nor does everyone who occasionally may underspend his income qualify as a greedy manager. We can only consider as such the person who does so habitually, prompted by love of money and neglecting his own needs as well as those of his friends. The suggestion that Philodemus defines vice primarily by reference to one’s disposition is further confirmed by the persistent recurrence of the same vice in the same person, described in the work *On Frank Speech*.

question. A good example are the types of arrogant men described by Aristo and endorsed by Philodemus (*De sup.* XVI. 27–XXIV. 21).¹² Both as a psychic and as a behavioural state, each ‘type’ is described in terms of a focal vice, such as arrogance, and also of a cluster of other evil characteristics which are peripheral and, perhaps, also secondary and subordinate to the primary vice.¹³

These characters or types indicate, it seems to me, that Philodemus considers that the various vices are interconnected in ways parallel to those in which the virtues are connected to each other. The traditional virtues are mutually entailing, and the same goes for the peculiarly Epicurean virtues such as generosity, philanthropy, and the disposition to make friends (*De elect.* XIV. 1–14). In a comparable manner, vices and vicious emotions constitute a complex network of reciprocally connected character traits. For example, the reluctance to share one’s wealth bears close ties to greed as well as to friendlessness, ingratitude, and insecurity. Flattery goes together with selfishness, greed, friendlessness, and ingratitude. Irascibility involves tendencies to be tyrannical, illiberal, ungrateful, egoistic, and insecure, and also distrustful of other people’s motives, lying, and acting in morally dubious and backhanded ways. On account of these tendencies, the irascible man harms society and breaks the laws, thus combining irascibility with misanthropy and injustice (*De ira* XVIII. 19–27).¹⁴ This view, that vices are interconnected and perhaps even mutually entailing, gains in plausibility if we remember that vices are dispositional states, not merely emotional and behavioural incidents. For there is considerable intuitive force to the suggestion that, for example, arrogance or envy or irascibility distorts character to such an extent that, if one suffers from these vices, one cannot be truly good. Moreover, the parallel sug-

¹² For instance, the inconsiderate and insolent man (*ὁ ἀθάρδης*) is a mixture of arrogance and self-conceit, scorn, fraudulence, and thoughtlessness (*De sup.* XVI. 29–33). The self-willed man (*ὁ ἀθελκαστος*) is another blend containing less thoughtlessness than the previous one, but more stubbornness and overconfidence (*De sup.* XVII. 17–25). Something similar goes for the man-who-knows-all (*ὁ πανειδήμων*: *De sup.* XVIII. 11 ff.).

¹³ I leave open for discussion the question whether this distinction between focal and peripheral vices should be drawn on metaphysical or on pragmatic grounds, or both.

¹⁴ Also, most vices stand in a relationship of interentailment with the fear of death. Such vices are cowardice, intemperance, impiety, foolishness, and injustice, and they are often combined with avarice, arrogance, friendlessness, and lack of internal harmony and of mental balance (see *De elect.* and *De morte passim*).

gested above between the interentailment of the virtues and the interrelations between vices may serve to introduce the point that all vices together and each of them separately occupy antithetical positions with regard to the virtues. In my opinion, these antitheses are meant to be construed in various ways, i.e. as one-to-one relationships or as one-to-many or as many-to-many. For example, flattery is opposed to frank speech (one-to-one), but it can also be contrasted with friendship on account of the flatterer's pretension to be one's only true friend (one-to-many). Moreover, if flattery, arrogance, and vicious economic attitudes are taken together, they stand in opposition to friendship as well as to the virtues related to it (many-to-many).¹⁵

It remains to talk about the practical aspects and implications of vice, which in fact occupy the largest portions of Philodemus' discussion. They concern primarily the dealings of the vicious man with other people and his attitudes with regard to matters of practical life. To give some examples, absence of good will removes the protective wall of friendship and leaves us at the mercy of sophists and parasites. Superstition and the fear of death render us covetous of money, neglectful of our health, indecisive, and dysfunctional in society. The catastrophic effects of anger cover the destruction of one's own body, the collapse of all social relationships, the inability to complete social and professional functions, and even the loss of life. And the vices that go together with excessive love of money compel the property manager to forsake the material advantages of friendship, get involved in endless toils, and take financial risks which frequently lead to utter ruin (*De oec.* XXIV. 11–33).¹⁶

At this point, I should like to comment briefly on three features of Philodemus' account. First, the length as well as the meticulous detail of his analysis concerning the practical implications of vice might appear tedious and philosophically unnecessary. However, aside from the obvious interest that it has for the philosopher's own audience, its thoroughness can be defended on systematic grounds

¹⁵ Philodemus' main task in *On Vices and the Opposite Virtues* . . . is, precisely, to explore such antithetical relationships and subsequently to outline methods which may cure specific vices, thus enabling the disposition of the patient to assume the corresponding virtues.

¹⁶ Moreover, the person susceptible to flattery gets alienated from his social surroundings and turns into a helpless victim of flatterers, thus endangering his wealth, power, and reputation. As to the arrogant person, he brings ridicule, suspicion, and discredit upon himself, deprives himself of co-operation and advice, and offends powerful men, often with the consequence of utterly destroying himself.

as well. For it provides strong support for the thesis that vice is not only intrinsically, but also *instrumentally*, painful, and hence ought to be eliminated. Second, the emphasis on the behavioural elements of vice should not mislead us into considering Philodemus a behaviourist of some sort. The evidence indicates not only that vice is not reducible to behaviour, but also that it is not necessarily manifested in behaviour either.¹⁷ Finally, throughout the study of the practical consequences of vice, Philodemus regularly sets the behaviour and actions of the vicious man in contrast to those of the sage. He does so in considerable length and detail, especially regarding those vices which might be attributed to the sage with some verisimilitude, should some slanderer wish to do so. (I shall return to this point later.)

Both in their own nature and in their consequences, all vices bear the stamp of irrationality. This is inherent in the vicious emotions, whose quality and intensity are such as to dim or to eliminate temporarily the operations of reason. The description of the enraged man as a madman who runs naked after his target, hurling stones and uttering incomprehensible words, makes this point eloquently (*De ira* x. 19–25, xii. 20–2). Irrationality is also intrinsic to empty beliefs and to the actions dictated by them. In Philodemus' view, interestingly, the fact that the vicious man can *explain* his act by appealing to false reasons does not make it rational. It would qualify as rational only if the agent could justify it by appealing to a set of *true* beliefs concerning both the states of affairs and the values involved in the action. But then, of course, the action would not be vicious, since empty beliefs are at least a necessary condition of actions prompted by vice.¹⁸

These forms of irrationality have to do with lack of self-aware-

¹⁷ Disdain can be concealed under the mask of affability, though eventually it is bound to become obvious in deeds as well as words. And flattery should not be suspected, let alone detected, as such, if it is to be effective.

¹⁸ If this account is correct, one may wonder why Philodemus stretches his criteria of rationality so far. The answer lies, I suggest, in the particular *manner* in which empty beliefs lead us to act. In *On Anger* (fr. 12 and 14) Philodemus submits that angry men act as if they were compelled by necessity, not by false beliefs. When they are under the influence of anger, they change personality and go against their own interests. The point seems to be that false beliefs move us to action in ways comparable to those in which violent emotions do, namely by means of their peculiar intensity and their compulsory force. Alternatively, Philodemus' view may be that empty beliefs force us to vicious acts precisely by inflaming certain emotions. A third possibility may be that, at least in this text, he intends to identify certain empty beliefs with the emotion of anger.

ness, which accompanies vice and constitutes one of the chief objects of Epicurean therapy. Thus, in the treatise *On Frank Speech* Philodemus repeatedly stigmatizes the self-importance and self-love on account of which certain groups of students resist admonition.¹⁹ However, irrationality is nowhere more apparent than in the consequences of vice, and in particular in the failure to calculate correctly the practical implications of one's actions and comportment. Thus, arrogance makes its victim lose what he values most, namely his dignity and respectfulness, credit for his deeds, social reputation, and political power (*De sup.* iv. 27–v. 12). No benefit could possibly derive from envy and joy at the misfortunes of others (*epichairekakia*)—states of utter bestiality (*τιῶν θηρωδεσμάτων*: *De inv.* fr. 3. 1) which do not befit humans. Greedy moneymaking renders the property manager incapable of correctly balancing the immense pains involved in the rapid accumulation of wealth against the negligible advantages of possessing such wealth (*De oec.* xviii. 7–31). And also, it makes him blind to the fact that spending money on one's friends and fellow citizens is, in truth, an excellent investment. As to anger, it seems to extinguish reason altogether, so that one cannot calculate either the short-term consequences of an act of rage or, even worse, the long-term poisoning of anger which makes one live 'nourishing misery' (*De ira* ix. 25–7). Nor does the enraged man's repentance (*μεταμέλεια*) signify a return to reason. On the contrary, it indicates an increase of irrationality, since the vengeful man now pulls his hair, sobs, and may even commit suicide (*De ira* xv. 9–15).²⁰

Philodemus' reasons for considering vice irrational are, ultimately, ethical. They stem from the eudaimonistic presupposition that no rational being opts willingly for what is bad for him or her. The analysis of various vices aims to establish that vice implies acting against one's own good and, consequently, bringing upon

¹⁹ These are grounded on false beliefs concerning the student's worth and capacities, the teacher's motives, the nature of the error, the agent's responsibility, and the efficiency of plain speaking. Philodemus denounces these attitudes as irrational precisely because they are founded on empty beliefs about the matters in question, involve inconsistencies in word as well as in deed, and obstruct therapy.

²⁰ Furthermore, as Philodemus notes, the irrationality of anger creates a vicious circle of pain. Rage, which is itself painful, compels us to avenge ourselves by inflicting pain on others, which forces them to take revenge upon us in their turn (*De ira* xiii. 1–13). This process of destruction would go on ad infinitum (and it does, in cases of family vendettas), unless we manage to reason about both the causes and the results of our rage.

oneself unhappiness and ruin. And conversely, it suggests that, if one wishes for happiness and, to a degree, for prosperity as well, one must be able to determine what is good and choose the right means for achieving it.

II

I come now to the criteria according to which, as I claim, Philodemus chooses to discuss certain vices in preference to others.²¹ Some of them emerge from the social and pragmatic aspects of the form of utilitarianism that he defends. For he generally concentrates his attention on vices liable to inflict obvious and considerable practical damage both upon the individual and upon the community in which he lives.

Thus, in pointing out the evils deriving from superstition, [*On Choices and Avoidances*] alludes to Nicias' reluctance to leave the coast of Sicily, which resulted in the loss of the Athenian navy (*De elect.* VIII. 7–19). The treatise *On Anger* notes the unreliability of the enraged man in keeping political conspiracies confidential (*De ira* XXV. 15–21). And the writings concerning arrogance and flattery indicate many ways in which these vices undermine the social fabric. Arrogance obstructs the ordinary give and take between citizens (*De sup.* II. 6–IX. 36), whereas flattery destroys one's social circle (*De adul.* VII. 1–6) and encourages demagogical and tyrannical tendencies in its victims (*De adul.* V. 1–4).

Philodemus' originality lies in the fact that he studies the *social* damage caused by these vices, which are commonly believed to affect only the happiness of the individual, not of the community. In his view, which one may well judge to be correct, bad financial management, parasitism, rage, superstition, and the like are not merely our own private business. They also touch upon the physical integrity and moral well-being of other members of the community²² and, therefore, their therapy is both a personal and a social desideratum.

²¹ For instance, Philodemus spends relatively little time on cowardice and injustice, and he deals with ignorance and lack of moderation largely outside the orbit of the medical analogy. The issue is then whether he has any formal criteria for choosing to discuss certain vices but not others. My answer is in the affirmative and, in what follows, I try to determine his chief principles of selection. However, I should say here that none of these criteria alone can account for all cases.

²² *De ira* VII. 21–6 makes this point explicit.

Another set of criteria has to do with the requirements deriving, specifically, from the framework of the Epicurean school. Thus, Philodemus focuses his attention on those vices which, more than others, undermine the complex links between the members of the community of friends. For instance, by offending and humiliating people, the arrogant man cancels the relations of good will and thankfulness obtaining between friends. The same goes for the flatterer, who is unable to respond to the generosity of his victim regarding his own needs. Superstition, avarice, and greed block one's desire to render favours to others, whereas ingratitude can be seen as the epitome of these shortcomings.²³ Placed in a broader perspective, all these vices can be seen as opposing friendship and the moral attitudes connected to it.

Next, Philodemus surely takes into account strictly pedagogical considerations as well. For the vices which mar the characters of students resisting frank speech overlap almost completely with the principal topics of the work *On Vices and the Opposite Virtues* . . . and of the treatises concerning emotions and ways of life. Anger is perhaps the most important obstacle to admonition and correction. It prompts students to abuse (*λυμάλνεσθαι*), slander (*βλασφημεῖν*), mock (*σκώπτειν*), and ridicule (*κωμωδεῖν*) their teachers (*De lib. dic.* fr. 18. 7–10). In these respects, they react as colts to their tamer, by challenging and kicking him as best they can (*De lib. dic.* fr. 87N. 1–8). Arrogance, combined with a misplaced sense of dignity and pride, makes them both aggressive and defensive.²⁴ In their insolence, inflexibility, and ungratefulness, they are compared to a little dog (*κυνίδιον*: *De lib. dic.* fr. 19. 4) that barks and refuses to move when told to go. Also, wealth and excessive attachment to external things diminish their sense of moral injury (*De lib. dic.* fr. 30. 1–31. 10), and the same goes for power, political eminence, and old age (*De lib. dic.* xxiii. 1–xxivb. 12). Moreover, frank speech is particularly unendurable to men who like to please (*De lib. dic.* fr. 34. 5–7) or are themselves susceptible to flattery (*ibid.*). The ways in which these vices prevent plain speaking from having any effect vary, but they have in common at least the elements of self-

²³ For it characterizes the person who *refuses* to render favours (*χάρις*) to other people for their own sake and who, correspondingly, does not feel thankfulness (*εὐχαριστία*) towards those who benefit him out of disinterested motives.

²⁴ For they defend themselves (*ἀμύνεται*) for wrongs which they have committed (*De lib. dic.* fr. 19. 1–11) by accusing the teacher of impracticality or incompetence or even evil motives (*De lib. dic.* xx. 5–xxa. 11).

deception and a diminished awareness of moral responsibility.²⁵ There is another factor determining Philodemus' selection of vices, namely the apparent correspondence (mentioned above) of certain vicious features to the characteristics of the sage. The analysis of the vices in question has, then, among other things, an apologetic purpose: to argue that, despite some superficial similarities, there is a world of difference between the vicious and the wise in these respects. Thus, the sage might be accused of arrogance on account of his disdain for things vulgar, of his dignity and seemliness (*De sup.* vi. 12–26), and even of the arrogant behaviour displayed by his servants (*De sup.* ix. 24–36). Philodemus anticipates these charges by contrasting the sage's grace and humanity with the hybristic behaviour of the arrogant man (*De sup.* v. 2–7, vi. 26–35, ix. 1–36).

The sage might also give rise to the suspicion that he is a flatterer, primarily because he seduces the students' minds, influences their habits, encourages them to attend Epicurean banquets, and keeps them close to him, removing them temporarily from their family. However, both Philodemus' work *On Flattery* and the unattributed Herculaneum papyrus *On Epicurus*, whose author is in all probability Philodemus, undertake to set the record straight: in contrast to the flatterer, the wise man captures students by praising the goods deriving from wisdom, and edifies their habits (*De adul.* (P.Herc. 222) ii. 1–21). As to the banquets offered at the school, they are not attempts to flatter the mob, as some slanderers claim, but rather expressions of hospitality and friendship (*De Epic.* (P.Herc. 1232) xxviii. 5–20). Things are trickier in the case of anger. For the sage *may* be more or less prone to anger and, indeed, he occasionally *needs* to display it in the course of frank speech. However, Philodemus solves this difficulty too, by appealing to his distinction between natural and unnatural anger and by arguing that, in contrast to the irascible man, the sage feels only *ὀργή*, not *θυμός* (*De ira* xxxvii. 20–xxxviii. 34, xliv. 9–xlv. 37, and elsewhere), although his *ὀργή* may sometimes involve feelings of profound alienation and hatred (*De ira* xlii. 1–6).²⁶

Philodemus' selection of vices may be motivated by aesthetic

²⁵ On the other hand, the removal of these vicious characteristics and the presence in the student of feelings of love, reverence, and the desire to reciprocate the benefits given to him by the teacher are signs that the therapy has succeeded and that the student has been cured.

²⁶ Also, his anger is brief and does not escalate in intensity; even if the offence is great, he never experiences great mental disturbance; and he never desires the

considerations as well. For he focuses on types of vicious behaviour which are strikingly inelegant and sets them in contrast to the sage's gracious behaviour. For instance, the pushy and vainglorious comportment of the arrogant man is opposed to the elegant (*ἀσόλοικος*) and gracious (*δεξιός*) way in which the good man carries his very real worth (*De sup.* v. 5–6). The servility of flatterers as well as the abuses, blows, and kicks administered to them by their victims are shameless and ugly to see (*De adul.* vii. 12–17). It is partly on account of the fact that they offend good taste that parasites and other sycophants are compared to little dogs, monkeys, and other tame animals. The images of the angry man and also of certain students' rudeness towards their teachers, as indicated by their comparison to little dogs (*De lib. dic.* fr. 19. 4), are repulsive. Equally repulsive is the picture of the miser trembling not to lose his pennies (*De elect.* xix. 12–16, xx. 6–13). Superstition and the fear of death too may offend good taste. In that connection, we should think of the lamentations of older men, panicked at the prospect of death and dragged away while still clinging to life (*De morte* xxxviii. 36–7), and we should appreciate the aesthetic force of the contrast between them and the Epicurean youth who departs glowing with joy (*De morte* xii. 28–xiii. 13).

Utility, friendship, pedagogy, clarification, apology, and even good taste then constitute, according to my argument, distinguishable reasons or criteria for which Philodemus chose to study extensively some vices more than others. However, these reasons are ultimately subordinate to the ethical considerations dictated by hedonism. They represent different perspectives from which vice is shown to cause much pain and very little pleasure, and hence give ample justification for the normative thesis that we *ought* to avoid vice and, if subject to it, *ought* to consent to therapy. I shall turn now to that topic.

III

In this section of the paper my central contention is that frank speech, *parrhēsia*, can be seen both as Philodemus' chief pedagogical technique *and* as a generic method of therapy, of which other devices (though not all) can be considered species or individual

punishment of the wrongdoer as an intrinsically pleasurable thing, but rather as a most necessary as well as most disgusting means of therapy.

applications. I shall outline my own account, first, of frank speech, and subsequently of other methods treating individual vices, and I shall examine precisely how the cure is effected in each of these cases.

As we are told in the treatise *On Frank Speech*, *parrhēsia* is a stochastic method,²⁷ applied by the Epicurean teacher *ad hoc* in order to cure a particular error committed by a student of the school on a particular occasion. As I understand it, every admonitory speech is primarily composed of two kinds of elements: bits of reasoning which show the student why he ought not to have committed the fault under correction, and also rhetorical and similar features which stir the emotions to achieve the required pedagogical goal. Taken together, stochastic reasoning and parrhesiastic ways of speaking aiming at the manipulation of emotions are, I believe, necessary, and perhaps even sufficient, components of the method.

Both these features underlie the distinction between two forms of plain speaking or two ways of exercising it, namely the mild one, corresponding to relatively painless admonition, and the harsh or bitter one, which involves causing some pain to the student (*De lib. dic.* fr. 6. 1–7. 10).²⁸ This is complemented by another contrast, between eulogistic *parrhēsia*, which praises the student and therefore is practised and received with pleasure, and corrective *parrhēsia*, denouncing faults and hence endured with displeasure (*De lib. dic.* 11b. 2–8).²⁹ The force of corrective speeches, on which I shall focus, further depends on the intensity of the emotions, and notably of anger, displayed by the teacher as he is delivering the admonition. Admonition sustained by anger-in-combination-with-hatred is presumably very bitter and painful, whereas corrective speeches conveying anger-with-blame are somewhat less hard to take (*De lib.*

²⁷ The stochastic or ‘conjectural’ nature of the method is pointed out, for instance, in *De lib. dic.* fr. 1. 8–9 and 57. 5–10.

²⁸ Most scholars assume that whether *parrhēsia* is harsh or mild depends exclusively on its rhetorical form: for example, harsh *parrhēsia* is one that contains terms of abuse and invective, whereas mild *parrhēsia* uses words of endearment. By contrast, I believe that the content of the arguments has also very much to do with the bitter or tender nature of the parrhesiastic speech. For example, the arguments pointing out the evil results of arrogance can be more or less hurtful to the dignity of the arrogant man and consequently render the speech in question more or less bitter.

²⁹ Of these two, the emphasis clearly falls on frank speech used for corrective purposes. For as Philodemus notes, praise is less necessary than blame, presumably because it encourages students already on the path to virtue, whereas reprimand aims at checking vice.

dic. fr. 87=92N. 4–9). Emotions also seem to determine the artfulness of *parrhēsia* (*De lib. dic.* fr. 10. 1–11). For Philodemus relates it somehow to the quantity and quality of anger that the teacher puts into it. Depending on the indignation that the teacher affects, the admonition is considered more artistic or more straightforward and simple (*ἀπλωτός*: *De lib. dic.* fr. 10. 4).³⁰

Harsh and mild elements can be blended into the same *parrhesiastic* speech and, in the event, they usually are (*De lib. dic.* fr. 14. 5–10). The reason for this lies, I submit, in Philodemus' firm belief that the student should be emotionally supported while he is undergoing therapy. Other features of the method deriving from that same belief are that the professor should never attack the personality of the student in general terms (*De lib. dic.* fr. 3. 4–5, 35. 7–11, 78=80N. 1–3), and that, throughout the admonition, he must express his own feelings of care and benevolence (*De lib. dic.* fr. 12. 1 ff., 80=82N. 7–11). It follows that the mixture of pleasant and painful elements as part of the same corrective speech is not recommended on the basis of a naïve faith in shock tactics, as some scholars have assumed. It derives from the far more challenging principle that it is essential to convey love in teaching virtue.

However, while *parrhēsia* does not shatter the student's personal dignity and pride, its application often requires that the teacher will address the student's *disposition* precisely *through* the correction of individual faults. And here, I think, lies an important link between Philodemus' pedagogical method and his treatment of vice. Thus, very harsh *parrhēsia* is recommended for irascible and self-confident students, whereas milder forms of it are fit for young people of a tender character (*De lib. dic.* fr. 7. 1–10, 87N. 1–8). Bitter speech seems more efficient in cases of deeply rooted, and therefore recurring, mistakes, whereas gentle admonition suffices for correcting an error the first time round. Moreover, the teacher cannot really *decide* whether to speak harshly or gently to a student, unless he first diagnoses the vices scarring his character. On

³⁰ The technicity of the method depends, I think, on the use of other devices as well. One is the correction of an error after having transferred it from the doer to someone else, e.g. the teacher himself. So, instead of admonishing Jim about a lie that he has told, the teacher reports (or invents) a speech that Epicurus has delivered to some student who has acted like Jim (*De lib. dic.* fr. 9. 1–9). Another device is to start the plain speech not straight from the fault at hand, but from a point apparently remote from it (*De lib. dic.* fr. 32. 1–7). In any case, Philodemus' assertion that frank speech implies various degrees of artfulness is probably connected to the claim that it is a genre of oratory, which differs, however, from deliberative rhetoric.

the other hand, the precise form of the admonition reveals the disposition of the teacher as well. In particular, it allows us to discern whether he is exercising frank speech out of a good disposition (*διάθεσις ἀστεία*: *De lib. dic.* 1a. 2) or out of a vicious one (*διάθεσις φαύλη*: *De lib. dic.* 1a. 4). Among the vices of the bad teacher, we recognize flattery, ambition and vainglory, ingratitude and the lack of good will, envy, irascibility, arrogance, impudence, and abuse—in other words, virtually the whole spectrum of vices discussed in the ethical treatises.

Equally relevant to the ethical dimensions of the method are the theses that it moulds character, and that it reveals dispositional features related to one's social and cultural identity. It forms the personality to such an extent that we can tell the kind and amount of admonition the sage has received from the way he applies *parrhēsia* to others (*De lib. dic.* 1a. 1–8, 11b. 8–13).³¹ It follows that, when *parrhēsia* has completed its work, it is both an educational tool and, as it were, a mental feature: the teacher cures the student and also moulds the student's capacities to admonish others by transmitting to him traits that the teacher has acquired himself in the same manner. Moreover, keen observation of the students' involvement with frank speech discloses truths about their parents, upbringing, and social class (*De lib. dic.* 11b. 6–13, 1a. 1–10). In particular, one can infer what kind of *parrhēsia* the parents have exercised and, consequently, what virtues or vices characterize them. This indicates once more that *parrhēsia* goes far beyond the scope of an empirical therapeutic method. It reveals what you are and where you come from.

The ethical legitimacy of frank speech is secured through the claim that it has its basis in nature. The student feels a 'biting', a discomfort at something that he has done, which prompts the (natural) desire to confess his action to the teacher or to a classmate. Even the sage experiences the natural need to open his heart to another human being, although his mistakes can never derive from a vicious disposition and hence do not constitute proper objects

³¹ Polyaeus, for instance, had not required much of it in order to become perfected and therefore he did not tend to make much use of it (*De lib. dic.* 1a. 8–11b. 15), whereas other sages needed a lot of corrective admonition themselves and used it profusely afterwards. However, this is not the only factor determining the kind of frank speech exercised by the sage. His temperament is also an important factor, i.e. whether he is more or less prone to anger.

of corrective *parrhēsia*.³² The therapy of frank speech delineates a context in which this natural desire for intimacy can be satisfied without fear or reservation. The outcome is the achievement of the goal set by nature, namely pleasure and the absence of pain.

This leads us to the medical analogy and its limits.³³ There is no doubt that, as an educational tool, *parrhēsia* has important affinities, methodological as well as ethical, with the methods of empirical medicine. These legitimize the comparison of the Epicurean teacher, who uses frank speech in order to correct a particular error, to the doctor administering medicine in order to cure a patient's disease. At the level of diagnosis, vice is detected by means of signs or by the observation of symptoms (*De lib. dic.* fr. 57. 3–7). These, as well as the non-evident aspects of the disease, vary from one patient to another, but they also have some features in common. Both common and individual features constitute the material of *historia* (*De lib. dic.* vb. 8–9), i.e. of the medical record of past cases (*De lib. dic.* vb. 6–12), and both are taken into account by the doctor or teacher in treating the case. Coming to the prescription of medicines, they are intended to match the disposition of the student or patient, and also the nature and severity of the particular fault or disease. The cure often succeeds, but there are cases of failure as well. These, Philodemus points out, are built into the conjectural nature of the therapy (*De lib. dic.* fr. 57. 5–10) and they vary in their causes. For instance, the sage proves unable to correct a particular error, or he may succeed in correcting it and yet leave untouched the vicious disposition of the student (*De lib. dic.* fr. 21. 1 ff.). He may use harsh *parrhēsia* where the gentle and cheerful one would do. Even the wise man can be mistaken about a student who is not, in truth, at fault, and hence apply frank speech unnecessarily (*De lib. dic.* fr. 62. 7–13, 63. 1 ff.). Or, he may not realize that the patient has been cured and that further use of *parrhēsia* is unwarranted (*De lib. dic.* 61. 5–10). In any one of these cases, the teacher is urged to act as the doctor would, namely to keep trying to cure the patient of the same disease or of a different one, by means of a similar or a different drug (*De lib. dic.* fr. 64. 1–66. 16). As in most stochastic arts, including medicine, so in the art of plain speaking the ability

³² Frank speech is not supposed to treat all errors, but only voluntary actions deriving from a vicious disposition.

³³ Relevant passages are, among others, *De lib. dic.* fr. 63. 1–11, 64. 1–65. 11.

to cure improves through collective experience (*historia*) as well as through practice. So the more the teacher will exercise his art, the better he can be expected to become at it. Further, the medical analogy implies that, for reasons of philanthropy, therapy must be available to everybody, even to people hopelessly deformed by vice. And it justifies a practice which may appear repulsive at first, i.e. denouncing to the teacher the errors of one's fellow students (*De lib. dic.* fr. 49. 1–50. 12). Finally, the simile holds with respect to the *dangers* inherent in the practice of frank speech. When performed by the wrong person in the wrong way, it can destroy the patient's personality, give weapons to his enemies, or even encourage his tendencies to vice. As the bad doctor further endangers the patient's health and even his life, so the evil or incompetent teacher can put at risk the moral and practical well-being of his students.

However, I would be cautious about stretching the analogy too far, for instance to the point of interpreting the cure effected through *parrhēsia* in quasi-physical terms. One crucial difference between the job of the doctor and that of the Epicurean therapist might suffice to explain this warning. All medical schools assume that the doctor bears considerable responsibility for the choice and the effectiveness of the treatment recommended. On the other hand, Philodemus believes, I submit, that the final success of *parrhēsia*, i.e. the complete extirpation of vice, is a matter of at least joint responsibility between the teacher and the student. Thus, the teacher does consent to treat the actions of a truly vicious character,³⁴ but does not assume responsibility for the fact that his patient will not live the good life (*De lib. dic.* fr. 21. 1 ff.). Additional reasons for restricting the application of the medical analogy are implied by other therapeutic methods, which I shall discuss next.

On Envy recommends two distinct remedies treating envy and joy at other people's misfortunes (*epichairekakia*), which, however, may be taken together. One consists in *understanding* and *memorizing* the principles of the Epicurean way of life, *δίαυτα* (*De inv.* fr. 14. 1–6), and especially those concerning the value of external goods and evils.³⁵ The reasoning implied by this technique is stochastic

³⁴ He does so by means of pretty drastic medicines, such as maledictions and insults (*De lib. dic.* fr. 21. 8–12).

³⁵ For instance, the envious man should rehearse arguments ready at hand (*πρόχειρος*: *De inv.* fr. 17. 2–3), which establish that a certain share of evils is well within the bounds of the human condition, and hence one should not get too upset about them (*De inv.* fr. 18. 4–9).

(*De inv.* fr. 17. 1), but it can achieve the cure, especially if it is combined with another drug treating the emotions. The envious person should *summon* his communal feelings and remember that, even if *he* is deprived of various goods, his fellow men and the city do benefit by them; he should also recall that he too will enjoy these goods in a sense, since he is part of the city (*De inv.* fr. 18. 4–9). So, this drug cures *epichairekakia* and envy by strengthening the patient's feelings of altruism and philanthropy as well as his commitment to the ideal of citizenship.³⁶ A third remedy may help as well: we should practise restraining our feelings of self-righteousness even in those cases in which they might seem justified. The idea seems to be that if we begin the therapy by gaining control over our vicious emotions in the difficult cases, it should be relatively easy to extend it and eliminate the vice altogether (*De inv.* fr. 19. 1–6).³⁷

Moving on to *On Arrogance*, we find that Philodemus recommends some of the therapeutic techniques of Aristo, the Peripatetic philosopher, probably enriched by thoughts of his own. One trick is to learn to humble ourselves when we have reason to boast and, conversely, to boost ourselves up when we feel demoralized (*De sup.* xi. 24–33). We can achieve this by measuring ourselves in turn against our superiors and then against our inferiors (*De sup.* xii. 4–12). Another device, which also treats envy and *epichairekakia* in so far as they overlap with arrogance, is to think of, and compare ourselves with, truly great men, who appeared that much greater because they behaved with simplicity, humanity, and sympathy (*De sup.* xiii. 8–30).³⁸ Another cure for arrogance is a kind of plain speaking towards yourself. Ask yourself *many times over* what it is that makes you feel so good about yourself and so contemptuous of others. Deprecate the reasons for your arrogance, e.g. your coat of office or your wealth (*De sup.* xv. 12–22). And try to *see* that your vice, taken to extremes, is nothing but stupidity and madness (*De sup.* xvi. 15–27). Some of these techniques, notably

³⁶ Notice that there is implicit tension between these two remedies, since the latter presupposes that some value is attributed to external goods whereas the reasonings constituting the first remedy minimize that value.

³⁷ Compare the Cynic belief that the achievement of virtue requires both knowledge and exercise (*ἀσκησις*).

³⁸ The reasoning implied here is probably consequentialist: the arrogant man wishing to get credit for his actions is encouraged to think of people who deserved and got it by behaving not with arrogance, but with the opposite virtues. And conversely, he should reckon that arrogant men in the past have not achieved their goals and that, if he sticks to his ways, he is likely not to get any rewards either.

parrhēsia towards oneself, are probably intended to apply to flattery as well.³⁹

The remedies against vices connected to expert activities are different again. In the treatise *On Property Management* Philodemus wishes to cure vices such as greed and ambition, which dictate assiduous financial activity, by subjecting economics to ethical considerations. The text does not clarify the specific devices achieving this goal. However, we can reasonably guess that the prescribed drugs would consist chiefly of stochastic arguments patterned according to the samples that we find in the treatise on economy. These concern the measure of natural wealth, the toils and risks inherent in the economic activities of the expert, the advantages of Epicurean economics, the good sources of income, and so on.

Philodemus is more explicit with regard to the medicines curing ingratitude and establishing good will. *On Gratitude* suggests that we can get rid of this habit of a most ‘hostile nature’ (φύσις ἐχθρά: *De grat.* XIV. 18) either by reading aloud (προσφωνεῖν: *De grat.* XIV. 14–15) the relevant Epicurean treatises, or by writing (διὰ γραφῆς: *De grat.* XIV. 16) against ungratefulness ourselves. Again, the content of these writings can be inferred to a degree from the arguments against ingratitude advanced by Philodemus in the same book. These arguments concern primarily students’ financial donations to the Epicurean community, which express their good will, and also the gratitude that the students owe to the sage because of the benefits that they derive from his teachings.⁴⁰

The remedy against inappropriate speech (κακομυλία: *De conv.* I. 2) comes as something of a surprise. In his short work *On Conversation* Philodemus advances silence (σιωπή: *De conv.* VI. 2) as an efficient treatment of the tendency to speak mindlessly and harmfully,

³⁹ The principal aim of remedies curing one’s susceptibility to that vice should be the development of the right kind of self-knowledge in the patient. For only then will he be able to distinguish the flatterer from the true friend. Further, the description of various types of flatterers suggests that blends of vices may require blends of remedies. For instance, a treatment of the denouncer should combine the drugs for arrogance mentioned above with medicines for flattery, servility, and envy.

⁴⁰ Some of these topics are also found in the work *On Frank Speech*. However, it is not clear whether the specific drugs of προσφώνησις and of γραφή, employed to cure ingratitude, are themselves forms of *parrhēsia*. Perhaps the latter can be interpreted as plain speaking exercised towards oneself, whereas προσφώνησις should be regarded as a practice of internalization and memorization of Epicurean ethical principles. If so, προσφώνησις overlaps considerably with one of the medicines recommended against envy (*De inv.* fr. 14. 1–5).

prompted by arrogance, conceit, and the passions.⁴¹ Silence, he explains, should not be recommended constantly or indiscriminately but only in certain circumstances and towards certain people, notably towards women, children, and slaves in order to remind them that the neighbours might overhear (*De conv.* vi. 2–6). In such cases silence usually succeeds where plain speaking would fail. For instance, *parrhēsia* would further inflame a child in a tantrum, whereas silence would allow the child to calm down and become rational again. Notice, then, that silence is a drug that the doctor recommends in some cases *instead* of plain speaking, not in combination with it. Note too that the medical simile can hold only in a weak sense here, if indeed it holds at all.⁴²

The writings *On Anger* and *On Death* contain the most detailed and systematic analysis of the means by which these emotions can be cured. Both methods of therapy are fairly complex and both involve extensive use of plain speaking, whose form and content are, however, different in each case.

According to the treatise *On Anger*, the presence of anger⁴³ is inferred by means of stochastic arguments (*καταστοχάζεται: De ira* II. 7) based on external symptoms. Its treatment is divided roughly into four distinct steps. The therapist points out to the enraged man in what respects the reasoning sustaining his rage went wrong, showing that his emotion is either exaggerated or groundless. He

⁴¹ The philosopher describes how that therapy is supposed to work, partly in answer to the charge that the silence imposed on Epicurean students deprives them of an important source of sensory pleasure, namely conversation (*ὁμιλία, συζήτησις*), and impoverishes their lives in that respect (*De conv.* iv. 1–11).

⁴² It is worth observing that silence seems a relatively new addition to the doctor's equipment. For Philodemus intimates that, in recommending silence, he disagrees with the sages: 'I keep quiet (about these things), since the sages speak even when they believe that not many things are likely to be achieved' (*De conv.* x. 9–12).

⁴³ There are various interpretations of Philodemus' views on the therapy of anger, which I do not go into here. However, two points defended by other scholars require comment: that the therapy of anger should be understood in quasi-physical terms, as the medical analogy dictates; and that approximately the first half of the treatise (up to col. xxx) contains a kind of mimic diatribe. I disagree with both these views. Although the medical simile is particularly helpful in the case of anger, it still should not be taken literally, as I have argued above. Moreover, it will become clear below that, in my opinion, the passages characterized as parody in fact constitute integral parts of Philodemus' own method. A word on the overall structure of the work: I assume that Philodemus gives a rough outline of his method of cure in cols. II–IV, and then a fuller picture of it in col. VII. What he does in the sequel of the work is chiefly to present various medicines against anger in a systematic way, i.e. following fairly closely the scheme set in those columns.

numbers one by one the causes of the patient's anger and, presumably, scrutinizes it in the same light. Then he *depicts* the pains likely to result from the patient's rage, for the patient personally as well as for the community. Finally, the therapist claims (and the patient is supposed to accept) that the symptoms of anger are common to all such cases, regardless of its intensity and of the patient's age (*De ira* VIII. 1–8, XXIII. 5–13).⁴⁴ The medicines administered in each and all of these steps make the angry person realize 'the true nature of the evil' and, perhaps, help him grasp the general rationale of the therapy as well.⁴⁵

Looking at the specific drugs administered in the course of the therapy, we should be able to determine further the manner in which the cure is worked on the angry person. The teacher should employ the rhetorical device of 'putting things before the eyes', which forces the enraged man to think pictorially of the evils related to anger (*De ira* III. 5–IV. 24).⁴⁶ These comprise consequences of which he is ignorant, others that he has forgotten or has chosen to

⁴⁴ Apparently, Philodemus and his teacher Zeno hold different views regarding this point. While Philodemus is interested in the common features of anger, Zeno describes in detail the characteristics of anger pertaining to different ages. If so, an interesting question is why Philodemus deviates from Zeno's model. One suggestion is that he follows the model of empiricist and/or methodist medicine in searching for 'commonalities' marking individual manifestations of the same disease. Another possibility is that Philodemus considers that his technique has greater therapeutic effect than Zeno's. At any rate, the interesting question is what *is* the therapeutic value of this technique. The answer may be that the patient is now able to place his anger into a broader perspective, can trivialize it somewhat, and hence submits better to treatment.

⁴⁵ Epicurean therapy achieved by these means can only be corrective, not preventive. In answer to Timasagoras, who holds that angry people cannot reason and hence cannot submit to therapy when they are seething with rage, Philodemus retorts that, in truth, treatment can only be applied when a person is in the grip of anger. For only then can the doctor actually *show* to him that his beliefs and behaviour are wrong (*De ira* VII. 5–20). Yet, the philosopher appears to consider the method preventive, at least in the sense that it presents the patient not only with the implications of his anger, but also with ways of avoiding angry outbursts in the future.

⁴⁶ In *On Anger* (I. 5–27) Philodemus criticizes some philosopher who is using the technique of 'setting before the eyes' ineffectively in order to attack the Stoic view about the emotions. Philodemus argues that that strategy makes the author appear ridiculous and raving, and his statement might seem an unqualified rejection of the technique in question. However, this cannot be so since Philodemus subsequently uses the device of pictorial sketching himself. I believe his point is that the technique is unsystematic and inefficient, *if used by itself*: one cannot attack the Stoic view that emotions are in fact bad judgements just by depicting the evils surrounding the angry man.

forget, others whose importance has escaped him, and yet others that he has not managed to see in a long-term perspective (ibid.).

In addition to the vivid depiction of evils, Philodemus offers arguments on a variety of subjects. Some of them show why anger is undesirable, others support the distinction between rage and natural anger, others establish that the sage does feel natural anger, yet others explain why this kind of anger should be tolerated. In addition, ‘epilogistic’⁴⁷ reasoning (*De ira* XLIV. 38–9) is used to refute the views of various dissenters, who claim that the sage feels anger no less than the common man. So, the medicines for anger treat both the emotions and the reason of the patient. On the one hand, pictorial thinking makes him feel ‘a great horror’ (μεγάλην φρίκην: *De ira* III. 14–15), which constitutes the motivational force prompting him to seek a remedy. On the other hand, various arguments offer him *reasons why* he should abandon his rage or, at most, transform it into natural anger.

The therapeutic tactics dispelling the fear of death are somewhat parallel to those addressing anger. However, in disagreement with other scholars, I believe that *reasoning* more than literary devices constitutes the core of the therapy in this case. In the treatise *On Death* Philodemus’ main task is to bring out the implications of the Epicurean thesis that with death comes complete loss of consciousness and that, hence, death itself cannot be an evil. His discussion is centred on cases in which death would appear to be, most definitely, an evil: dying prematurely, childless, or away from home; dying ingloriously or violently and unjustly; perishing in an accident and against expectation; leaving behind grieving friends or rejoicing enemies; dying dishonoured by a poor burial or by the forgetfulness of men. The remedies proposed by Philodemus aim to remove the empty beliefs on account of which we consider death in such circumstances a supreme evil and to replace them (if possible) with true beliefs about the event. They achieve this in a variety of ways, different groups of drugs performing different functions.

Some arguments refute empty beliefs outright, without advancing true opinions in their stead. For instance, Philodemus maintains that dreading death on account of the fact that one’s enemies will rejoice is an unnatural sorrow and should simply be abandoned. For

⁴⁷ For discussion of the possible meaning of this term see M. Schofield, ‘*Epilogismos*: An Appraisal’, in M. Frede and G. Striker (eds.), *Rationality in Greek Thought* (Oxford, 1996), 221–37 at 228–9.

the dead person cannot be distressed or harmed by his enemies' feelings and, anyway, he should not care about the reactions of evil men (*De morte* xx. 3–14). At other times arguments refuting false beliefs are used *in combination with* other arguments establishing true beliefs *about the same matter*. In such cases the shift in beliefs brings a change of feelings or attitudes based on these beliefs. For example, Philodemus first rejects the belief that wisdom increases with time, which constitutes the basis of our fear of premature death. Then he establishes the thesis that wisdom can, in fact, be reached in a limited time (*De morte* xii. 11–xiii. 13), which implies that we should accept death calmly and even joyfully.

In other cases Philodemus' arguments work the cure in a different way again. They remove the empty beliefs supporting a certain attitude and also show *how that same attitude* could acquire a sounder basis. An example is the wish to fall in battle, sword in hand. Philodemus maintains that it is a foolish choice if motivated by the desire for glory (*De morte* xxvii. 35 ff.), but that it would be a rational choice if it were based on the belief that such a death would be quick and painless (*De morte*. xxviii. 20–7).⁴⁸ However, the method of supplying a rational basis for some kinds of sorrow about death also implies changes in the *nature* of that sorrow. It turns intense grief into a natural pang (*δηγγμός*: *De morte* xxv. 8), comparable to the bite caused by natural anger. Early death, which frustrates the natural desire to enjoy life in health and peace of mind, is bound to cause such pangs.⁴⁹ Several therapeutic arguments then heal the patient by integrating these natural counterparts of the fear of death into his moral and emotional outlook.

These medicines are administered together with parrhesiastic descriptions of a more or less theoretical nature, some morbid, others almost poetic. Examples are the stark language rendering the ugliness of death and the fate of the corpse (*De morte* xxviii. 32 ff.), the sober enumeration of the causes of death (*De morte* xxxvii. 27 ff.), and the wonderful metaphor of living in an unwalled city (*De morte* xxxvii. 27–9). The therapy is completed by one last device,

⁴⁸ I should mention that the therapy turns out to be more complex than that. Providing a hedonic justification for the wish to die in battle is only the first step. Subsequently, Philodemus argues that in fact it is usually more painless to die in bed than in battle and that, therefore, dying in battle cannot really be a rational choice (*De morte* xxviii. 27–32).

⁴⁹ The same goes for leaving projects incomplete, dying an unjust death, leaving our beloved ones destitute, and perishing in a foreign land, away from home.

namely holding up the example of Epicurus. In connection with the sorrow of dying abroad, Philodemus records the care bestowed on Epicurus' corpse by the other sages of the school (*De morte* xxvii. 1–8). Their act embodies the right attitude towards death, in particular the death of a godlike man in the foreign land of Athens. It is an act of reverence, not of superstition, performed in mild sorrow rather than in excessive grief. It shows how friendship counterbalances the sorrows of living abroad, and how it renders the prospect of dying there immaterial to one's happiness.⁵⁰

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⁵⁰ In ending this paper I should like to make a brief comment concerning the nature and scope of the remedies intended to cure the fear of death. In the Epicurean view (which is shared by many of us), the fear of death is *the* fundamental emotion of human pathology, singularly powerful and deeply implanted in us. Therefore, therapy cannot be limited to fragmentary expressions of it, but should aim to transform radically the patient's frame of mind. For only then will death stop being the focus of our thoughts and, instead, will yield its place to the concern of living the good life. In order to achieve such a shift, the therapeutic process should overlap considerably, I submit, with the further education of the patient. In that sense, Philodemus' therapeutic strategies treating the fear of death are also part of his pedagogical project.

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