

FROM TRANQUILLITY TO AGITATION: REMEDIES USING THE IMAGINATION AND THE PASSIONS IN EARLY MODERN THOUGHT

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Abstract. My concern in this paper is to contribute to the recovery of the therapeutic dimension of the early modern notion of imagination, which demands further interrogation despite the increased scholarly attention of recent years, by looking at the context of seventeenth-century practical English treatises on the faculties and passions of the soul. What I would like to argue is that this literature makes room for a set of prescriptions aimed at achieving mental, bodily and moral well-being that rely on the imagination and the passions and involve maintaining the two in constant activity. My claim is that this remedy emerges as a consequence of the authors' close allegiance to the Greek-Arab medical tradition and its physiological account of mental and affective motion, which erodes the Stoic ideal of 'tranquillity' and reinterprets it as a form of 'idleness' or 'stagnation'. My paper then looks at what vision of the good life and what type of interaction among the faculties of the mind is consistent with such prescriptions. Building on the work of McMahon (1976), Jackson (1989; 1990), James (1998; 2006) and Lyons (2005), I shall investigate this set of questions in a selection of texts authored by Thomas Wright (1601, 1604), Robert Burton (1621), Edward Reynolds (1640) and Walter Charleton (1674).

Keywords: imagination, treatises on the passions, Stoic therapy, neo-Galenism, the good life

Introduction

Scholarly work on the early modern notion of imagination¹ and its tight relationship with the passions² has focused on their disturbing effects on man's soul, mind and body: their role in producing melancholy, their interference with the higher operations of the understanding and will, their dangerous sway over all mental faculties and bodily humours, as well as their susceptibility to supernatural influence all come to the fore in intellectual historical inquiries into the subject. Although this emphasis coincides with that of early modern texts themselves, the therapeutic dimension of the imagination and of the passions, i.e. their role in ordering and remedying man's soul and directing him towards virtue and piety, has not yet been fully recovered. The aim of the following paper is precisely this – to join the effort of

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providing a much more comprehensive account of this neglected dimension of early modern thought and to invite similar efforts by looking at a development which takes place in seventeenth-century English treatises on the faculties and passions of the soul. Building on the contributions of McMahon (1976), Jackson (1989; 1990), James (1998; 2006) and Lyons (2005), the aim of my paper is two-fold. First, I would like to take a closer look at the imagination- and passion-oriented remedies which emerge in this context and expand upon those that have been identified so far (section 1). I aim to argue that such remedies are in fact part of a wider prescription for maintaining both mind and heart in constant activity, which emerges once Stoic notions of affective ‘tranquillity’ and ‘perturbation’ are redefined and re-evaluated, primarily under the impact of the Greek-Arab medical tradition and its account of the physiology of the faculties and passions during ‘exercise’ and ‘idleness’ (section 2). Secondly, I shall consider what vision of the good life coincides with such remedies and what interaction among the faculties of the mind it sanctions (section 3). Thus, my paper seeks to answer questions such as what (re)definition of the good life is underlain or perhaps generated by the transition towards such remedies; whether imagination- and passion-oriented remedies for the mind entail a complete departure from the authority of reason or rather invite collaboration among these faculties; or, what is the reason behind the proliferation of remedies centred on the imagination and the passions rather than on reason. I aim to explore these questions in a selection of practical treatises on the faculties and passions of the soul authored by Thomas Wright (1601, 1604), Robert Burton (1621)³, Edward Reynolds (1640) and Walter Charleton (1674) – a genre that is highly eclectic and combines “psychological” and “physiological” approaches with moral and theological concerns and is generally geared towards the diagnosis and cure of the soul.⁴ All incorporate in their works a physiological account of the workings of the faculties and passions, which relies heavily on traditional Greek-Arab medical approaches, as they are reworked and popularized by early modern neo-Galenists.⁵ Two particular cases emerge in our corpus: that of Reynolds, who lacks a medical account, yet is still indebted to this tradition, even though to a lesser degree, and that of Charleton who extensively combines traditional with modern approaches drawn from the physiology of Willis, Gassendi, Descartes or Digby.⁶

Although the early modern properties of the imagination have been extensively discussed⁷, I believe it would be useful to recall these here. Despite some variations in early modern maps of the mind, the imagination is generally placed within the sensitive soul⁸ and, since it bears a hybrid nature and is made up of both sensitive and cognitive components, acts as a mediator between man’s various faculties, his mind and body.⁹ It collects sense impressions, communicates them to the other faculties and, on their basis, triggers corresponding affective and somatic phenomena. The imagination is thus the locus of “impressions”, “images”, “thoughts” or “cogitations”¹⁰ strongly imbued with emotion. Speaking of the faculty’s contents, Reynolds refers to them broadly as “thoughts” by which he understands “those springings and glances of the heart, grounded on the sudden representations of sundry different objects”.¹¹ However, according to Katharine Park’s classification, early modern discussions of the imagination’s properties do not only recognize the faculty’s “retentive” capacities, but also its “manipulative” abilities.¹² Once impressions

received through the senses are gathered within the imagination, the faculty holds the capacity to manipulate these images – it may alter them or form altogether new pictures in the mind. Earlier commentators, such as Francis Bacon and Pierre de la Primaudaye, claim, respectively, that the imagination is able to “join that which nature hath severed, and sever that which nature hath joined”¹³ or that it “changeth and rechangeth, mingleth and vmingleth”¹⁴ its materials. Reynolds ascribes three distinct operations to the faculty, namely “creation” or “new making of objects”, “composition” or “new mixing them” and “translation” or “new placing them”.¹⁵ It is precisely on account of this latter feature that the imagination, together with the passions, was commonly seen as the main source of mental and bodily disturbance, of cognitive and moral error. Frail and flawed, primarily as a consequence of the Fall, the faculty would misevaluate or distort impressions and thus confuse the passions, misinform reason and misguide action. Nevertheless, it is for these very same reasons that, perhaps surprisingly, the imagination holds an equal capacity to remedy man’s soul. Since it is directly linked to the passions, when carefully handled, the imagination can act in various ways upon the images it contains and thus yield desirable affective and somatic responses.¹⁶ As Susan James argues, the early modern period witnesses a shift of focus from remedies centred on reason to those centred primarily on the passions, due to a loss of confidence in the efficacy, strength and even desirability of the former.¹⁷ My concern in this paper is to examine this development and the alternative strategies for achieving mental and bodily well-being that it brings into focus. Although they do not always involve one another, I have chosen to treat the curative capacities of the imagination and those of the passions together not simply on account of their close allegiance¹⁸, but because both gain prominence within the same wider early modern trend that consists in departing from the authority of reason alone and of redeeming the powers of man’s sensitive soul.

1. Diverting One’s Thoughts and Countering Passion with Passion

Contributions on the therapeutic dimension of the early modern notion of imagination have taken two main directions: some scholars, such as C. E. McMahon, have focused on the faculty’s ability to alter the body in accordance with the images it contains and to inspire faith and hope, which contribute to the efficacy of medical treatment; others, most notably Stanley W. Jackson and John Lyons, have looked at a set of Stoic and particularly Epictetian techniques for disciplining the imagination in order to achieve mental and bodily well-being and to inspire virtue.¹⁹ In what follows, I would like to consider the latter in greater detail and expand upon the list of strategies that have already been identified by historians. This body of prescriptions is centred on the aim of remedying the mind and body through a careful management of external impressions and is defined by two main tendencies: (1) the first is the recommendation to avoid the presence of objects that disturb the imagination before the eyes and to seek those that are agreeable to it; (2) the second advises man to use his or her imagination in order to work upon the images it already contains and shape them into more pleasing ones. This latter method can itself be divided into two other, distinct techniques, which involve either (2a) removing or (2b) modifying/replacing one’s mental images. We must note, however, that the texts we are surveying do not

distinguish very neatly among these various strategies. The difference between the two main approaches seems to be that the former relies on the mere 'retentive' capacities of the imagination and the latter on its 'manipulative' powers. In other words, impressions are selected or managed either at the level of the senses or at the level of the imagination itself. This is suggested by the emphasis of such discussions which alternates between 'objects', 'occasions' or 'circumstances' in the former case and mental contents such as 'thoughts', 'cogitations' or 'conceits' in the latter. In addition, some authors, such as Wright, claim that men who are unable to 'overrule' their passions or vices must avoid contexts that favour them²⁰, thus suggesting that man has the option to either work inwardly upon the impressions which affect him or to simply avoid the objects which trigger them. Nevertheless, even though we are able to discern several directions within one and the same technique or set of techniques, these are not in fact made explicit and the faculty's degree of agency and exact mode of operation is often left unexplained. What is more, various combinations of distinct strategies can often be observed. The same holds when it comes to the manner in which the imagination is believed to act inwardly upon its contents, whether to displace, alter or entirely replace them.

The very first injunction can be identified in Wright's treatise on the passions, who urges man to "flie occasions" that incite unwanted passions and "find out occasions" that allow one to exercise appropriate ones.²¹ The same advice is rehearsed by Burton, who claims that the symptoms of melancholy may be alleviated by avoiding "bad objects" or having unpleasant company "removed" and contemplating "faire objects" instead, regardless of the sense through which they are perceived.²² He recommends gazing at "excellent beauties", "attires", "ornaments" and taking part in "hunting", "sports", "jests", "musick", "merry tales or toyes", "drinking", "singing", "dancing" etc. which are believed to provide the imagination with agreeable species.²³ These shall "distract their minds" from displeasing impressions or passions "on which they are so fixed and intent".²⁴ It is not explained, however, how the imagination judges which objects to avoid and which to seek out or whether it is indeed the imagination and not the faculty of reason which performs this process of evaluation and selection – a question which I will later resume. The second of these strategies also surfaces in Wright's and Burton's treatises. According to Wright, one of the main means of "mortifying" the passions is to "diuert the thoughts to some other obiect"²⁵. Similarly, Burton writes that all "vain, false, frivolous imaginations", "absurd conceits", "feigned feares and sorrows", "restless thoughts" must be either "expelled" or "diverted"²⁶, thus including both sub-strategies mentioned earlier. The use of vocabulary which includes categories such as "thoughts", "imagination" or "conceits" suggests that the imagination must work with and shape its own, inward, mental contents, regardless of what is present or absent before the eyes. Indeed, Burton prompts man to "setle" his or her imagination and "recreate the minde by some contrary object" or "a more pleasing meditation".²⁷

All these techniques make up the main body of prescriptions for managing the imagination that this literature provides. Their aim is to effect changes over the passions of the mind and often the humours of the body, to harmonize and rectify them. But what exactly are the effects that such strategies have over the passions?

What affective dynamics do they seek to produce? And how does a healthy and virtuous affective life look like? Surprisingly, although the prescriptions discussed above are of Stoic inheritance, the effects over the passions which they seek to produce do not fall within the Stoic ideal of *ἀπάθεια*. Instead, they are in tune primarily with the Aristotelian recommendation of striking the “mean” between two extreme passions or the similar Hippocratic-Galenic injunction of maintaining a harmonious balance among passions, material qualities and humours, as opposed to annihilating them altogether.²⁸ The prescription is thus to direct the imagination (either externally or internally) towards images which trigger passions able to modify or, more precisely, to temper those that are extreme and thus undesirable. While, as Jackson explains, this approach relies on the principle of contraries²⁹, pairs of opposites believed to enact such dynamics naturally varied with the classificatory scheme early modern thinkers used. This strategy features prominently in Wright’s text, in a section that draws heavily on the Aristotelian injunction: “if thou perceiue a vehement inclination to the one extreame, procure to bend thy selfe as farre to the other; for so thou shalt with more facilitie come to the middest”.³⁰ Nevertheless, at times, it appears that the prescription is to rise up different, though not necessarily opposite, passions which either remove or replace the former. This approach, which Jackson hints at³¹, is rather in tune with Platonic³², Epicurean³³, Christian³⁴ and, only to a certain extent³⁵, Stoic visions of the good affective life which recommend cultivating certain passions over others. That is, passions are no longer deemed appropriate as long as they are moderate, but rather, some passions are condemned and others preferred. The aim of the strategies discussed above is thus to remove the former and replace them with the latter. This technique features, for instance, in Burton’s very last chapter where he speaks of “mirth” as an appropriate means to “expel” the “griefe and care” which accompany melancholy.³⁶ It also surfaces in Reynolds’ text, who claims that unwanted passions can be “stopped” or ‘expelled’ by awakening others.³⁷ He gives the Biblical example of “perfect love” which “casts out fear”.³⁸ Although Reynolds frequently speaks of removing passions by introducing others that are equally “repugnant”³⁹, as when one disease is cured by causing another, he does suggest that the aim is to rise up “passions of a lighter nature”.⁴⁰ Reynolds’ phrasing is, nevertheless, ambiguous since it is not clear whether “lighter” refers to the more agreeable nature that is characteristic of some passions or whether it simply means moderate. Indeed, such ambiguity or tension between the two distinct ideals – that of cultivating moderate passions and that of cultivating particular passions – surfaces throughout these texts. It emerges particularly in treatments of the passions that rely on the Greek-Arab medical tradition which, I shall argue, work in such a way as to highlight the second ideal. I aim to discuss exactly how and why this happens in the third section of this paper. What is relevant is that these remedies seek to garner health and virtue by focusing on the dynamics amongst passions themselves and allowing them to harmonize one another through their interaction alone. Passions, writes Reynolds, “as they mutually generate, so they mutually weaken each other”.⁴¹ The reason why this recipe for attaining a good and virtuous life is preferred to others seems to be owing, precisely as James observes, to its heightened degree of efficacy. According to Reynolds, passions, like beasts, are sometimes “then easiest taken, when they who

hunt them, put on the skins of beasts”.⁴² That is, the best cure for passion is passion itself.

2. From ‘Tranquillity’ to ‘Idleness’

a. Imaginative Volubility

Having surveyed the most common remedies which make use of the imagination and the passions, I shall argue that these are in fact part of a wider prescription which has received little scholarly attention so far and which recommends keeping the two in constant motion or activity. My suggestion is that this prescription emerges once two parallel dichotomies – that of the imagination’s ‘fixedness’ and ‘volubility’ and that of the ‘tranquillity’ and ‘perturbation’ of the passions – are reworked and re-evaluated, owing primarily to the medical tradition and to physiological treatments of the passions. Let us begin with the imagination.

In his treatise, Reynolds rehearses commonplace early modern descriptions of the imagination as a faculty which naturally displays a heightened degree of activity. This is accounted for in several ways: first, the imagination is in charge with the largest portion of the mind’s operations, i.e. its thoughts, and secondly, it exhibits great liberty in performing these operations, i.e. it is able to act upon them however it pleases. The former of these, namely the fertility of human thoughts, is further explained as a consequence of two other things: the kinds of objects that are assigned to the imagination and the faculty’s mode of operation. Not only does the domain of the imagination include all types of external impressions, but it handles these in a quick and unbound manner.⁴³ The motion of the imagination is thus defined by “quickness”, “volubility”, “lightness” or “restlessness”, that of particular thoughts by “suddenness of journey”, “vastness of way”, occurring in “continual interchanges and successions”⁴⁴. What is more, it appears that the role of the imagination is to set the other faculties of the mind in a similar type of motion. It is said to “quicken and raise” the passions “with a kind of heat and rapture”⁴⁵, to “quicken, allure, and sharpen”⁴⁶ the will, as well as assist the understanding’s apprehension which, we are told, depends precisely on the increased activity of the imagination.⁴⁷

Although these descriptions coincide with the natural or healthy functioning of the faculty, Reynolds claims that it can easily fall into two main errors – “levity” or “too much volubility”, on the one hand, and “heaviness” or “dull *fixedness*”⁴⁸, on the other. While the imagination is naturally agile, it must neither be too active and various in its operations, nor too fixed. This is generally reduced to the notion that the faculty must neither contemplate one single object for too long, nor pass too quickly through a variety of distinct images. In addition, Reynolds tells us, the imagination must be able to tell apart those species that are worthy of lengthier contemplation from those that may be quickly discarded.⁴⁹ The issue that emerges here is the tension between healthy and corrupt ‘volubility’. Although the latter is defined as an excessive variant of the former and describes the condition of a “floating”, “inconstant”, “vanishing” or “lightening”⁵⁰ imagination, it is not clear where to draw the line between the two – an issue which I shall take up at the end of this section. Nevertheless, although the tension remains and is recurrent throughout these writings, the imagination’s increased activity is usually commended and the dangers of excessive ‘volubility’ minimized

owing to the more immediate and significant consequences ascribed to its tendency towards “dull fixedness”. If we take a closer look, we will see that this distinct valorisation is dictated by physiological accounts of the effects that both errors bear on the mind and body, which are based on the Hippocratic and Galenic injunction against ‘idleness’ and appraisal of ‘exercise’, as it is inherited and reworked by early modern thinkers via Arab medicine⁵¹ and reinforced by several other parallel contexts. These include humanist and Protestant ideals of the *vita activa*⁵² and – one that is particularly relevant to our endeavour – the emerging early modern association of intellectual ability with speed of performance, which has been studied by C. E. Goodey⁵³ and similarly located within the Galenic tradition⁵⁴. Goodey attributes this overlap to several shifts that take place at this time, most notably, the conceptual erosion between “logical understanding” and “quickness of apprehension” (the latter of which is attached primarily to the imagination in our texts), the increasingly unstable distinction between imagination and reason, as well as the rise of the notion of *ingenium*.⁵⁵

As far as early modern neo-Galenic approaches to ‘exercise’ and ‘idleness’ or ‘rest’ are concerned, the latter is believed to lead to the build-up of humours and other superfluities, to impair the quality, quantity and motion of the spirits and to reduce innate heat whilst promoting cold and moisture, all of which interfere with the proper functioning of the mind and body⁵⁶ and become associated with various kinds of moral and spiritual distemper.⁵⁷ When it comes to the ‘idleness’ of the mind or of the imagination, our authors focus on the first of these consequences. Citing Galen and Fernel alternatively, Burton writes that just as an “idle” body allows the overgrowth and obstruction of impurities, so does an “idle” mind promote the accumulation of “evil and corrupt thoughts”, all of which bring about further debilitating effects: “their bodies become full of gross humours, winde, crudities, their minds disquieted, dull, heavy”.⁵⁸ Burton states that the mind, when “idle”, having no other means of employment, turns inwardly and occupies itself with troubling thoughts and passions.⁵⁹ This is particularly true of the imagination which, due to its “restless, operative and quick” nature, will wander and become easily preoccupied with “some feare, jealousy, discontent, suspition, some vain conceit or other” unless it is kept “in perpetuall action, ever employed”.⁶⁰ To further illustrate this point, Burton makes use of two metaphors – that of “untild grounds” which become overgrown with “weeds” and that of a “standing pool” whose water stagnates and becomes putrid and filled with impurities.⁶¹ Elsewhere, Burton speaks of the consequences that an inactive imagination has on the spirits. In contemplation – which is understood here as the mind’s intense preoccupation with a single object and bears associations with ‘idleness’ – the spirits gather in the head leaving the other organs unattended which results in an inability to adequately perform all necessary mental and bodily operations and to expel the superfluities which gather in other parts of the body.⁶² If we jump to Charleton, we can see that he too lays stress on the quality and motion of the spirits involved in acts of imagination. If the animal spirits are “less pure, subtil and active than is requisite, or hindered in their expansion and motions”, the imagination and intellect will not be able to function properly and will produce errors.⁶³

In order to counter the effects of ‘idleness’, man is prompted to perform both bodily and mental forms of ‘exercise’. The latter, which is our interest here, mainly consists in allowing oneself to receive numerous and various impressions via the senses, particularly sight, or to otherwise engage one’s thoughts.⁶⁴ In his section on “exercise rectified”, what Burton mainly does is to prescribe objects whose contemplation renders the mind active and affords delight:

But the most pleasant of all outward pastimes is that of Aretaeus, *deambulatio per amoena loca*, to make a pretty progress, a merry journey now and then with some good companions, to visit friends, see cities, castles, towns, [...] to walk amongst orchards, gardens, bowres, mounts, and arbours, artificiall wildernesses, green thickets, arches, groves, lawnes, rivulets, fountains and such like pleasant places, like that of Antiochian Daphne, brooks, pools, fishponds, betwixt wood and water, in a faire meadow, by a river side, *ubi variae avium cantationes, florum colores, pratorum frutices, &c.* to disport in some pleasant plain, park, run up a steep hill sometimes, or sit in a shady seat, must needs be a delectable recreation.⁶⁵

The fact that Burton’s section takes the shape of little more than a lengthy list of objects to be perceived seems to mimic precisely the type of activity that is required of the imagination. The faculty’s objects must be abundant and diverse and its operation swift. Although the focus is often on sense-perception and on objects to “see”, “feed [one’s] eyes with” or “behold”⁶⁶, Burton also dwells upon activities which help occupy the mind in various ways. The list, too long to be rehearsed in its entirety, most notably includes recreations such as “games”, “sports”, “labour”, “feasts”, “singing”, “dancing”, “musick”, “stage-playes”, “tales” or “study”.⁶⁷ These are said to work in such a way so as to “distract” or “alter” man’s “extravagant impertinent thoughts”, “vain thoughts and imaginations”, “foolish phantasie[s]” “continuall meditations”, “conceits” or “cogitations” and, instead, “refresh”, “exhilarate” or ‘whet’ the soul.⁶⁸ Although the imagination or phantasy is mentioned very little throughout this discussion, the fact that mental exercise is addressed to its domain (the senses, thoughts, meditations etc.) is a reliable indication that its design is to engage this particular faculty first and foremost.

The relevance of this type of psychological and moral remedy is suggested by the fact that it seems to incorporate the ones we have mentioned earlier. One illustration is a passage from Burton in which the Galenic prescription of (mental) exercise appears to assimilate the Stoic strategies for handling the imagination that we have surveyed above:

Study is only prescribed to those that are otherwise idle, troubled in minde, or carried headlong with vain thoughts and imaginations, to distract their cogitations, (although variety of study, or some serious subject, would do the former no harm) and divert their continuall meditations another way.⁶⁹

The Stoic-inherited techniques and the early modern vocabulary which signals these (i.e. to “distract” and “divert”) are used here in a Galenic context, namely a discussion of one of the six non-naturals (i.e. ‘exercise’). Mental exercise is thus understood as a constant and alert effort of countering disagreeable with agreeable impressions. Moreover, Burton cites Mesue who claims that men should “distract their minds from feare and sorrow, and such things on which they are so fixed and intent”⁷⁰, thus indicating that the Stoic-inherited strategy of redirecting one’s thoughts is not just a means of countering a disagreeable thought with an agreeable one, but of preventing the imagination from becoming fixed on a single object.

Hence, we have seen that an active imagination begins to be positively valued – it is able to prevent the accumulation of disagreeable images, thoughts or passions by constantly fumbling through its contents, thus promoting mental and bodily health alike. We have also seen that an active imagination is defined by two main qualities: speed and freedom of motion. Nevertheless, excessive quickness and liberty of imagination is often described as a form of error and distemper and the call to moderation is invoked. This is reinforced by the use of the Aristotelian and Galenic phrase “quickness and activity of apprehension”⁷¹ which, as Goodey has shown, is marked by an inherent tension between too much and just enough mobility, particularly in a Galenic context.⁷² What I would suggest is that, although the tension between moderate and excessive imaginative motion remains unresolved throughout these texts, the issue does not necessarily lie in the quickness of motion, but in its regularity and direction (or lack thereof). Reynolds suggests that an excessively voluble imagination is defined not only by its ‘inconstant’ motion, but also by the fact that the faculty becomes easily preoccupied with unsuitable objects. In other words, an excessively voluble imagination is unable to discriminate between worthy and unworthy objects and thus quickly discards the former and prolongs its contemplation of the latter. It “makes many needless excursions upon impertinent things, and thereby interrupteth the course of the more needful and present operation of the soul”.⁷³ Similarly, Burton suggests that the imagination’s quickness becomes an issue only when it is uncontrolled and the faculty becomes concerned with inadequate or deleterious objects – it is “carried away instantly with some feare, jealousy, discontent, suspition, some vain conceit or other”⁷⁴ – and must be redirected.

b. Affective Agitation

Let us now consider the passions and look at a similar re-evaluation – that of the Stoic understanding of affective ‘tranquillity’ and ‘perturbation’. As both James and Kraye demonstrate⁷⁵, the Stoic affective ideal of *ἀπάθεια* began to be contested by early modern thinkers owing to its unfeasibility, lack of desirability and incompatibility with Christian doctrine. Kraye adds that this critique was particularly characteristic of early modern English thinkers, as opposed to their Continental counterparts, as an outcome of their naturalistic approach.⁷⁶ In what follows, I would like to show how this ideal becomes even further eroded under pressure from physiological and medical accounts of human affective life.

Throughout his treatise, Reynolds explicitly argues against the Stoic ideal of what he calls “senseless apathy”.⁷⁷ The arguments he brings are manifold, ranging

from a re-reading of the Stoic ideal itself, as suggesting not that man should not be moved with passion at all, but that he must not allow his passions to interfere with his judgements and resolutions⁷⁸, to a reconsideration of passions themselves not as errors, but as natural motions that are essentially good.⁷⁹ Not only does he claim that, as long as they are governed by reason and do not become overly violent, passions are beneficial, instrumental in achieving virtue and must therefore be carefully shaped and put to use, rather than altogether removed, but – and this is what I would like to draw attention to – he opens a discussion which recalls Burton’s own warnings against ‘idleness’: “it is absurd to think, that all manner of rest is either healthful or clear; or, on the other side, all motion, diseased and troublesome”.⁸⁰ Like Burton, Reynolds draws an analogy between the static mind and the still water of a “puddle” which becomes easily corrupt⁸¹. Instead, the mind or heart must resemble a “spring”⁸² or, according to Burton, a pool of water which is “continually stirred by the wind”⁸³, which is to say that it must be kept in constant motion. Unlike Burton, however, Reynolds’ interest lies with the passions. An active affective life is thus conceived as the most suitable psychological state for promoting health and virtue and preventing the onset of distempers. This is why Reynolds commends “the agitation of passions”, as long as it is kept in moderation (i.e. it is neither too “calm”, nor too “violent”), set in accordance with reason and directed towards the cultivation of virtue.⁸⁴ Thus, the Stoic understanding of ‘tranquillity’ and ‘perturbation’ is either reinterpreted or rejected and the ideal of ‘tranquillity’ replaced with that of an adequate form of ‘agitation’. While the metaphor of stagnant water originates as a Latin commonplace, it is predilect in early modern neo-Galenic medical contexts⁸⁵ as an aid to physiological explanations of the bodily and mental build-up and obstruction which ensues from ‘idleness’. Although Reynolds’ account only provides few and sparse physiological explanations, his use of the metaphor seems to point precisely towards the medical understanding of the dangers of ‘tranquillity’ or ‘apathy’. In addition, Reynolds also alludes to the medical analogy between soul and fire in order to argue that the former’s motion is not only natural, but indicative of its perfection.⁸⁶ Hence, although Reynolds attacks the Stoic ideal mainly via his closer allegiance to the Aristotelian, Peripatetic and Christian ideals, his arguments have their share in medical approaches as well.

A similar shift occurs in Charleton’s physiological account of the passions, at the beginning of which he discusses the two distinct states in which the sensitive soul can be found, i.e. either “*quiet and tranquillity*” or “*disquiet and perturbation*”⁸⁷, and rehearses commonplace descriptions of the former’s benefits and the latter’s dangers. Nevertheless, a closer look at Charleton’s text will show us that, largely due to its physiological angle, both ‘tranquillity’ and ‘perturbation’ are in fact defined as distinct types of motion. The difference is that the former is “perpetual”, “calm” and “equal”, while the latter “irregular”, “violent” or “tumultuous”.⁸⁸ All passions, adds Charleton, are ascribed to this latter state. Even so, ‘perturbation’ is further divided into what Charleton calls two other “gestures” or “postures” of the soul, i.e. “expansion” and “contraction”⁸⁹, which correspond, at least roughly, to “pleasure” and “pain”.⁹⁰ It is at this point that ‘perturbation’ or the motion specific to the passions receives a new connotation. When it experiences passions such as “joy” or “pride”, the soul

“expand[s]” or becomes “amplified” and provides a more “abundant influx” of spirits which “vigorously agitate the *Praecordia* or *vital parts*” and allow the blood to “flow more copiously” and “diffuse it self more freely and speedily” throughout the body. However, when faced with passions such as “grief” or “fear”, the soul “contracts”, is unable to provide its “due influx of Spirits” and thus can only perform its actions “slowly and weakly, or perversely”. The “vital parts” consequently “slagg, suffering the *blood* to remain in their conduits longer than it ought, even to the danger of stagnation, and consequently of sudden death”.⁹¹ In other words, passions which ‘expand’ the soul set it in an appropriate degree of motion which allows it to perform its operations more easily, while those that cause it to ‘contract’ compromise its normal functions. This suggestion is rendered explicit when Charleton states that impressions or passions that afford pleasure and expand the soul set the spirits into “brisker, but regular motions conformable to their nature and uses”, while those that are contrary bring them to “confusion”.⁹²

The distinction between passions that ‘dilate’ and those that ‘contract’ the heart is by no means particular to Charleton, but a commonplace in the literature we are surveying that can also be identified in Wright and Burton. The distinction is originally Stoic, where both ‘dilation’ and ‘contraction’ are understood as equally misguided types of motion⁹³, but receive different valuations once they are reworked by the medical tradition and included in a systematic physiological account which demonstrates the benefits of the former and dangers of the latter. Wright similarly claims that passions such as “Pleasure” or “Delight” ensure the purity of the spirits, generate a greater number of these and spread them throughout the body, thus promoting heat, removing superfluities and facilitating both mental and bodily operations. On the other hand, “feare”, “sadnesse” and “despayre” damage the spirits and interfere with their proper motion and distribution, diminish heat and moisture and thus prevent both mind and body from functioning adequately.⁹⁴ The diverging valuations which are attached to the two types of passions are made evident in Wright. He claims that the latter are “more dangerous to the body” and so “men proove lesse harme in those, than in these”⁹⁵, while Burton similarly asserts that the former class of passions “preserves the body”, whereas the latter “macerates the soule” and “subverts the good estate of the body”, leading to melancholy and even death itself.⁹⁶ In addition, the former passions are further recommended owing to their association with heat and moisture which, according to the medical tradition, represent the two material qualities which help maintain the ‘vital flame’ and are thus best suited to promoting life and health.⁹⁷ We can thus see that the physiological and medical understanding of the adequate motion which some passions produce is rehearsed in our texts. However, what is specific to Charleton’s treatise is that it allows us to observe how the Stoic ideal of ‘tranquillity’, despite being asserted, is immediately subverted by physiological explanations of the workings of the passions. As we have seen, ‘perturbation’ is in fact split into three distinct varieties of motion – a type of ‘vigorous agitation’, on the one hand, and either ‘stagnation’ or ‘confusion’, on the other. What is more, the first is characterized by the animate, yet ‘equal’ and ‘regular’ motions which in fact describe ‘tranquillity’. Hence, ‘tranquillity’ is recast as an adequate type of motion, indistinguishable from that of pleasure-inducing passions,

while ‘perturbation’, though still understood as a form of ‘confusion’, is also reinterpreted as ‘stagnation’.

As far as actual remedies are concerned, in both Reynolds’ and Charleton’s treatises, such discussions are accompanied by the assertion that health, virtue and even happiness can be built by kindling, shaping and redirecting one’s passions, instead of suppressing them. Reynolds states that passions must be appropriately “excited”, “directed” or “moderated”⁹⁸ and Charleton similarly claims that we must “dispense” the passions “with such dexterity”⁹⁹ so as to take advantage of all the benefits they afford. Admittedly, Reynolds’ text does show signs of inconsistency when he claims that passions might also need to be “repressed”, according to the rule of reason, in the same place where he argues that passions require “amendment, not extirpation”.¹⁰⁰ Such claims are, nevertheless, sparse in Reynolds’ text and it is likely that they refer to limited situations. Although this prescription is by no means new, what I would like to suggest is that it can also be understood in the context of this (re)definition of moral health as constant motion or exercise. A less common remedy which is consistent precisely with this picture of mental and moral well-being can however be identified in Reynolds’ treatise: one way of moderating one’s affective life, he claims, is to achieve a “cautulous admixture of passions amongst themselves”¹⁰¹ which results in “scattering”, “distracting”, “interrupting” and even ‘weakening’ them.¹⁰² This strategy prevents the overgrowth of violent and dangerous passions by deflecting them into “many cross and broken streams”.¹⁰³ Thus, Reynolds seems to put forward an argument for maintaining variety amongst the passions, since it appears that the more passions one experiences, the weaker and more manageable they will become. Reynolds claims that the same effect can also be obtained either by directing one and the same passion towards a variety of distinct objects or by confiding in another.¹⁰⁴ What all these remedies seem to say is that the richness of one’s affective life, rather than resulting in excessive forms of affectivity, will in fact allow passions to mutually appease, adjust and harmonize each other. This remedy seems, once again, to incorporate several other strategies of modifying a passion with the help of another. When discussing the affective dynamics which obtain when ‘admixing’ or “confounding”¹⁰⁵ one’s passions, Reynolds reiterates the notion that passions can be “stopped”, “bridled” or “moderated”¹⁰⁶ by allowing them to interact. The various forms of curative interaction we have discussed in the first section thus appear to be assimilated within the wider prescription for cultivating affective variety.

Again, the heightened motion or activity which the soul undergoes when experiencing dilating passions is marked by the speed, ease and uniformity of the spirits. Such motion is however said to become dangerous when excessive. Even so, the excessive motion that defines perturbation does not seem to consist in the increased speed or expansion of the spirits, but rather, in their irregularity or inconsistency: “[t]hen it seems that the same frail soul is so strongly shock’d and commoved, that not only her *vital* part, the blood, the calm and equal circulation being interrupted, is forced to undergo irregular floods and ebbs, and other violent fluctuations”.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, at times, perturbation does become synonymous with “vehement”¹⁰⁸ or “violent”¹⁰⁹ motion which generates excessive heat and dryness and thus brings about debilitating effects over the mind and body. Interestingly enough,

the issue with excessive motion is often that, when prolonged, it actually works in such a way as to deprive the soul of its activity, a notion which in fact reinforces the prescription for mental and affective exercise: “after much pleasure and laughter, men feele themselves both to languish, and to be melancholy”.

In what follows, I shall consider what this prescription tells us about early modern approaches to the good life.

3. Refashioning the Good Life

As we have seen, the Stoic appraisal of ‘tranquillity’ and condemnation of ‘perturbation’ is reworked throughout this literature – a shift which can be observed in prescriptions for handling both the imagination and the passions. ‘Tranquillity’ becomes associated with the dangers of ‘idleness’ or ‘stagnation’, while ‘perturbation’ is replaced with adequate forms of ‘exercise’ or ‘agitation’. We must be aware, however, that such realignments are by no means straightforward at this time. The call to moderation can be heard throughout our texts and discouraging pictures of misguided and over-much affective activity are still drawn and asserted. Nevertheless, the good life is increasingly defined as an active mental and affective life, as suggested by the remedies we have been reviewing – that of ‘exercising’ one’s imagination in various ways or that of maintaining and carefully shaping or allowing one’s passions to commingle. Another aspect of this redefinition is that the good life becomes conformant with particular passions over others – passions such as ‘joy’, ‘delight’ or ‘pride’. Here we encounter two difficulties: first, the existence of competing lists and classifications of passions; and secondly, the tension between various affective ideals, more specifically, those that recommend cultivating particular passions over others and those that recommend either suppressing or moderating any passion whatsoever. This complicates any effort to trace the history of privileged passions, all the more since syntheses of diverging affective taxonomies and ideals may often be identified. In our particular case, favourable descriptions of pleasure-inducing passions which ‘dilate’ the soul and set it in motion go against not just the ideal of apathy or temperance, but also against associations of ‘pleasure’ with vice and sin. At the same time, although prescriptions for achieving mental and bodily health often speak of the cultivation of ‘joy’, ‘delight’, ‘mirth’ or ‘pleasure’, as seen most emphatically in Burton¹¹⁰, they are immediately overbalanced by discussions of the deleterious effects of experiencing such passions in excessive proportions and of bodily and sensitive pleasures in general. This is why no coherent picture of how our authors felt about such passions can be made out, which is further complicated by the fact that few explicit discussions can be found as to whether and why it might be beneficial to cultivate one or the other.

Nevertheless, we can see that such passions do gain a certain degree of privilege in our texts. In Burton, we may notice that the Stoic distinction between dilating passions directed at objects which are esteemed ‘good’ and contracting passions directed at objects deemed ‘bad’¹¹¹ slips into an ambiguous, yet valorised distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ affections. Although we are able to identify positive, albeit complicated, valuations of passions such as ‘joy’, ‘pleasure’ or ‘delight’, what I would like to suggest is that they are recommended not simply because they are

accompanied with pleasure and thus able to counter ‘fear’, ‘sorrow’ or ‘melancholy’, as in Burton¹¹², but because, as we have seen, they promote health-inducing activity of both mind and body. Thus, it is once again likely that our texts’ indebtedness to the medical tradition is responsible for indicating the beneficial effects of such passions and of partly disentangling them from their associations with sinful pleasure. This constitutes, perhaps, an additional reason why Charleton adds a rare focus on pleasure to that on virtue and wisdom when sketching his picture of the good life, apart from his Epicurean affiliations:¹¹³

I am confirmed then, that because man is constituted propens to Passions, he is not therefore the *less perfect*, but rather *the more capable of pleasure* from the right use of the good things of this life.¹¹⁴

Elsewhere, Charleton claims that men who are “most apt to be moved by passions” are able to “tast more of the pleasures belonging to the Sensitive Soul”¹¹⁵ and later adds that man’s aim should be to learn “how to subdue and govern all his Affections, and how to dispense them with such dexterity, as not only to make all the Evils they produce, easily tolerable, but even to reap internal satisfaction and joy from all”.¹¹⁶ Charleton’s comments can likely be read as one of the first steps taken to align ‘pleasure’ with ‘virtue’ within definitions of the good life – a shift which reaches its full development by the mid eighteenth-century.

Another question to be asked is whether, as has been suggested, visions of the good life which place more emphasis on the imagination and the passions diminish or exclude the role of reason in achieving health and virtue. Our attempt to answer this question is complicated by the fact that we are provided with few, if any, explanations as to how the faculties interact when enacting such remedies. However, the two distinct therapeutic approaches are at times clearly distinguished from one another. There is a difference between “perswading by reason” and “thinking of something else”¹¹⁷, as there is between shaping one’s passions “by the power of reason” and doing so through “a cautelous admixture of passions amongst themselves”.¹¹⁸ All these methods can be identified in our texts. At other times, they appear in combination with one another. For instance, when confronted with a troubling impression, Charleton claims that we should “avert out cogitations another way” until the initial violence of our passions has faded and we are strong enough to “convert our will chiefly upon following those *reasons* that are contrary to what that passion suggesteth, although they appear less valid”.¹¹⁹ This is to say that we must first modify the images contained in our imagination and only afterwards use reason to provide an accurate evaluation of external impressions, persuade the passions and redirect the will. Although, as we can see, the role of reason does become diminished with the rise of remedies centred on the imagination and the passions, prescriptions which advise keeping one’s sensitive powers in heightened and constant motion do not exclude the former’s authority and sanction the complete autonomy of the former two. First, the reader is constantly reminded that the activity of both the imagination and the passions must remain conformable to reason. Burton holds that it is necessary to “[r]ule thy self then with reason; satisfie thy self; accustome thy self; wean thy self

from such fond conceits, vain feares, strong imaginations, restless thoughts”¹²⁰ and Reynolds maintains that “[w]hen affections are disjointed from reason, and cast off the reins whereby they should be guided, there cannot be that sweet harmony in the motion thereof, which is required to the weal of man’s nature”.¹²¹ Secondly, it is suggested that their liveliness is in no way inhibited by rational interference. Passions may be ‘scattered’ and ‘distracted’ not just by mixing them amongst themselves, but also “by the power of reason”.¹²² What is more, we have seen that the excesses of imaginative and affective activity are not necessarily defined as excessive speed or mobility, but as various forms of discordance between these and the faculty of reason – the failure to accurately evaluate and select impressions which results in the failure of regularity and direction of motion. Thus, it might perhaps be more appropriate to suggest that the emergence of visions of the good life which focus on the imagination and the passions are not in fact based on a departure from and distrust in the authority of reason, but on emerging ways of understanding mental and affective activity.

Conclusion

My attempt in this paper has been to argue that seventeenth-century English practical texts on the faculties and passions of the soul develop a set of alternative prescriptions for remedying the mind and body and for instilling virtue centred on the heightened activity of the imagination and of the passions. I have suggested that the rise of such prescriptions takes place under the impact of the Greek-Arab medical tradition and its insights into the physiology of mental and affective motion, which work in such a way as to associate Stoic ‘tranquillity’ with the Hippocratic-Galenic account of ‘idleness’ or ‘stagnation’. On the other hand, the ‘volubility’ of the imagination and the ‘agitation’ of the passions receive a positive re-evaluation by being ascribed the benefits of mental and bodily ‘exercise’. Their constant and vigorous activity is believed to prevent the accumulation of disturbing impressions, images or thoughts and to allow the passions to mutually moderate and harmonize one another, as well as to quicken, disperse and purify the spirits, maintain ‘innate heat’ and expel all bodily superfluities, thus helping the mind and body to perform their operations with greater ease. Such activity remains, nevertheless, subject to the dangers of excess and the Aristotelian and Galenic call for moderation and balance is frequently invoked. Even so, my suggestion has been that such ‘excess’ is conceived as a form of misguided, rather than increased motion. In addition to this, my interest has been to examine what such prescriptions tell us about emerging understandings of the good life, which, I have argued, lay emphasis on sensitive phenomena and on their inherent remedying capacities, privilege those passions that are believed to set the mind and body in motion and tend to diminish the authority of reason. This is not to say that such strategies circumvent reason altogether, but the exact manner in which reason is said to assist the imagination and the passions when performing various mental or affective therapeutic exercises, although not explicitly described, seems to have less to do with cognitive and discursive control, but with the regulation and direction of imaginative and passionate motion. I have thus suggested that a growing tendency to grant greater dignity to man’s sensitive faculties can already be observed within the context seventeenth-century English literature on the faculties and passions and that

this development can be more adequately understood not as a reaction against the authority of reason, but as the consequence of an emerging redefinition of imaginative and affective motion.

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References

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- ² See, for instance, Gaukroger, S., *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1998); Sorabji, R., *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Dixon, Th., *From Passions to Emotions. The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Schmitter, A.M., "Passions and Affections", in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. P. R. Anstey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- ³ Although Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) is not, strictly speaking, a treatise on the faculties and/or passions of the soul, it does include a *De Anima*-type inquiry and a comprehensive examination of the role of the passions in the production and treatment of melancholy.
- ⁴ For a comprehensive account of the authors, as well as the disciplines, genres and sources that define this literature see Corneanu, S., *Regimens of the Mind: Boyle, Locke and the Early Modern Cultural Animi Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); Schmitter, A.M., (2013).
- ⁵ For accounts of early modern neo-Galenic physiology and medicine and their role in shaping the practical literature we are examining see Gowland, A., *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Schmitter, A.M., (2013); Sutton, J., "Soul and Body", in *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. P. R. Anstey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- ⁶ Booth, E., *A Subtle and Mysterious Machine: The Medical World of Walter Charleton (1619-1707)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 129-30.
- ⁷ For discussions on the properties of the early modern imagination see Park, K., "The Imagination in Renaissance Psychology" (M.Phil. dissertation, University of London, 1974); Harvey, R., *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1975); Lyons, J. D., *Before Imagination: Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
- ⁸ Burton, R., *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) (London: Vernon, Hood and Sharpe, 1806), 30-1.
- ⁹ Park, K., (1974), 77-8.
- ¹⁰ For the vocabulary used to speak of the imagination's contents see Burton, R., (1806), 435-53; Reynolds, E., "Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soul" (1647), in *The*

Whole Works of the Right Rev, Edward Reynolds, D.D., ed. B. Riveley (London: Printed for B. Holdsworth, 1826), 20-8.

¹¹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 23.

¹² Park, K., (1974), 68.

¹³ Bacon, F., *Of the Advancement and Proficiency of Learning* (1605), ed. M. Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 101.

¹⁴ De La Primaudaye, P., *The Second Part of the French Academie* (1580), trans. Thomas Bowes (London: Printed by G. Bishop, R. Newbery, R. Barker, 1594), 155.

¹⁵ Reynolds, E., (1826), 24.

¹⁶ McMahon, C. E., “The Role of Imagination in the Disease Process: Pre-Cartesian history”, *Psychological Medicine* 6 (1976): 179-184.

¹⁷ James, S., “The Passions and the Good Life”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); James, S., “The Passions in Metaphysics and the Theory of Action”, in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁸ The tight relationship between the imagination and the passions is a commonplace in the genres we are surveying not just along the seventeenth century but even later. The two are not only said to be similar in nature (i.e. both exhibit a material component and are part of the sensitive soul), but to also interact with one another when performing their operations (i.e. the production of passions depends on the imagination): “First then, to our imagination commeth, by sense or memorie, some object to be knowne, convenient or disconvenient to Nature, the which being knowne (for *Ignoti nulla cupido*) in the imagination which resideth in the former part of the braine, (as we proove) when we imagine any thing, presently the purer spirites flocke from the brayne, by certayne secret channels to the heart, where they pitch at the doore, signifying what an object was presented, convenient or disconvenient for it”, Wright, T., (1604), 45.

¹⁹ McMahon, C. E., (1976): 180; Jackson, S. W., “The Imagination and Psychological Healing”, *Journal of the History of Behavioural Sciences* 26 (1990a): 345-58; Jackson, S. W., “The Use of the Passions in Psychological Healing”, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 45 (1990b): 150-175; Lyons, J. D., (2005), 5-6.

²⁰ Wright, T., *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601) (London: Printed by Valentine Simmes for Walter Burre, 1604), 83-4.

²¹ Wright, T., (1604), 83.

²² Burton, R., (1806), 435.

²³ Burton, R., (1806), 454.

²⁴ Burton, R., (1806), 454.

²⁵ Wright, T., (1604), 86.

²⁶ Burton, R., (1806), 435-9.

²⁷ Burton, R., (1806), 439.

²⁸ James, S., (2007), 206; Gowland, A., (2006), 45.

²⁹ Jackson, S. W., (1990): 151-4.

³⁰ Wright, T., (1604), 82.

³¹ Jackson, S. W., (1990): 150.

³² James, S., (2008), 1360.

³³ Sorabji, R., (2002), 201.

³⁴ Kraye, J., “*Ἀπάθεια* and *Προπάθεια* in Early Modern Discussions of the Passions: Stoicism, Christianity and Natural History”, *Early Science and Medicine* 17 (2012): 251.

³⁵ Jackson, S. W., (1990): 157.

³⁶ Burton, R., (1806), 453-4.

³⁷ Reynolds, E., (1826), 43.

³⁸ Reynolds, E., (1826), 43.

³⁹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 44.

⁴⁰ Reynolds, E., (1826), 43.

⁴¹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 43.

⁴² Reynolds, E., (1826), 43.

⁴³ Reynolds, E., (1826), 20-4.

⁴⁴ Reynolds, E., (1826), 22-4.

⁴⁵ Reynolds, E., (1826), 20.

⁴⁶ Reynolds, E., (1826), 21.

⁴⁷ Reynolds, E., (1826), 23.

⁴⁸ Reynolds, E., (1826), 24-7.

⁴⁹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 26-7.

⁵⁰ Reynolds, E., (1826), 26-7.

⁵¹ For further details on the early modern inheritance of this prescription see Tipton, C. M., *Exercise Physiology* (New York: Springer, 2003), 8-11; Gowland, A. (2006), 44-5.

⁵² One example can be found in Bacon's *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, where he recommends "active" vs. "passive" good: "There is also another important pre-eminence of the active good, produced and upheld by that affection which is inseparable from human nature; the love of novelty and variety; which in the pleasures of the sense (which is the principal part of passive good) is very confined, and can have no great latitude. 'Only think how often you do the same thing over and over. Food, Sleep, Play, come round in a perpetual circle; a man might wish to die, not only from fortitude or misery or wisdom, but merely from disgust and weariness of life.' But in enterprises, pursuits and purposes of life there is much variety; wherof men are sensible with pleasure in their inceptions, progressions, rests, recoils, reintegrations, approaches, and attainings to their ends; so as it was well said, 'Life without a purpose is unsettled and languid'", Bacon, F., *The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (London: Longman and Co., 1858), 11.

⁵³ Goodey, C.F., "Intellectual Ability and Speed of Performance: Galen to Galton", *History of Science* 42 (2004): 465-80.

⁵⁴ The link between speedy apprehension, adequate understanding and mental and bodily health, as well as its grounding in Galenic physiology is noticeable, for instance, in Nicholas Culpeper's 1652 translation of the *Ars Medica*: "The Vertues and Vices of Principal Operations shew the Vertues and Vices of the Principals themselves: I call them Principal Operations which come from the Principals alone without a Medium; as subtil wit shews a good substance of the Brain, a dull wit shews the Brain to be too thick, a ready Apprehension, a sound Judgement, a stable and firm Memory, shews a good Brain, dullness of Apprehension, apish Judgment, and Forgetfulness shew a bad brain; fickleness in Opinion shews a hot Brain, stability in Opinion, shews a cold Brain", Culpeper, N., *Galen's Art of Physicke* (London: Printed by Peter Cole, 1652), 17.

⁵⁵ Goodey, C.F., (2004): 469-80.

⁵⁶ Tipton, C. M., (2003), 2-8; Gowland, A., (2006), 43-9.

⁵⁷ Gowland, A., (2006), 58-61.

⁵⁸ Burton, R., (1806), 123-4.

⁵⁹ Burton, R., (1806), 123.

⁶⁰ Burton, R., (1806), 443. What is interesting here is that the imagination's inordinate tendency towards excessive volubility is shown to lead to the opposite error of fixedness, which suggests that the two frailties may in fact be understood as facets of the same

distemper and calls for a nuanced approach to the “quick” vs. the “ever employed” imagination.

⁶¹ Burton, R., (1806), 123.

⁶² Burton, R., (1806), 187.

⁶³ Charleton, W., *Natural History of the Passions* (London: Printed by T. N. for James Magnes, 1674), 64.

⁶⁴ Burton, R., (1806), 407.

⁶⁵ Burton, R., (1806), 407.

⁶⁶ Burton, R., (1806), 407-10.

⁶⁷ Burton, R., (1806), 411-31.

⁶⁸ Burton, R., (1806), 413-26.

⁶⁹ Burton, R., (1806), 425.

⁷⁰ Burton, R., (1806), 454.

⁷¹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 23.

⁷² Goodey, C.F., (2004): 471.

⁷³ Reynolds, E., (1826), 26-7.

⁷⁴ Burton, R., (1806), 443.

⁷⁵ James, S., (2006), 206-9; Kraye, J., (2012): 243-53.

⁷⁶ However, a similar critique of rationality and emphasis on the contribution of the passions towards the attainment of virtue can also be observed in the work of several continental thinkers of the time, most notably French moralists such as Pascal or La Rochefoucauld. This suggests that the development we are surveying is part of a wider shift, yet the relevance of medical discourse in such contexts is not as clear. James points rather towards the impact of Christian morality and Protestant pessimism with respect to human nature, see James, S., (2007), 208-10; James, S., (2008), 1375-91.

⁷⁷ Reynolds, E., (1826), 39.

⁷⁸ Reynolds, E., (1826), 40.

⁷⁹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 38-9.

⁸⁰ Reynolds, E., (1826), 48.

⁸¹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 48; Burton, R., (1806), 123.

⁸² Reynolds, E., (1826), 48.

⁸³ Burton, R., (1806), 123.

⁸⁴ Reynolds, E., (1826), 48.

⁸⁵ Roach, J., (1985), 39.

⁸⁶ Reynolds, E., (1826), 38.

⁸⁷ Charleton, W., (1674), 68.

⁸⁸ Charleton, W., (1674), 69-70.

⁸⁹ Charleton, W., (1674), 72-3.

⁹⁰ Charleton, W., (1674), 82-4.

⁹¹ Charleton, W., (1674), 72.

⁹² Charleton, W., (1674), 84.

⁹³ Sorabji, R., (2002), 34.

⁹⁴ Wright, T., (1604), 60-1.

⁹⁵ Wright, T., (1604), 61.

⁹⁶ Burton, R., (1806), 34.

⁹⁷ Gowland, A., (2006), 49.

⁹⁸ Reynolds, E., (1826), 39.

⁹⁹ Charleton, W., (1674), 172.

¹⁰⁰ Reynolds, E., (1826), 39.

- ¹⁰¹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 42.
¹⁰² Reynolds, E., (1826), 42-3.
¹⁰³ Reynolds, E., (1826), 44.
¹⁰⁴ Reynolds, E., (1826), 44-5.
¹⁰⁵ Reynolds, E., (1826), 42-4.
¹⁰⁶ Reynolds, E., (1826), 43.
¹⁰⁷ Charleton, W., (1674), 69.
¹⁰⁸ Wright, T., (1604), 60.
¹⁰⁹ Charleton, W., (1674), 69.
¹¹⁰ Burton, R., (1806), 453-61.
¹¹¹ Sorabji, R., (2002), 29-30.
¹¹² Burton, R., (1806), 453-61.
¹¹³ See Parkin, J., *Science, Religion and Politics in Restoration England: Richard Cumberland's De Legibus Naturae* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 1999); Booth, E., (2005), 73.
¹¹⁴ Charleton, W., (1674), 169-70.
¹¹⁵ Charleton, W., (1674), 169.
¹¹⁶ Charleton, W., (1674), 172.
¹¹⁷ Burton, R., (1806), 437.
¹¹⁸ Reynolds, E., (1826), 42.
¹¹⁹ Charleton, W., (1674), 183-4.
¹²⁰ Burton, R., (1806), 439.
¹²¹ Reynolds, E., (1826), 37.
¹²² Reynolds, E., (1826), 42.